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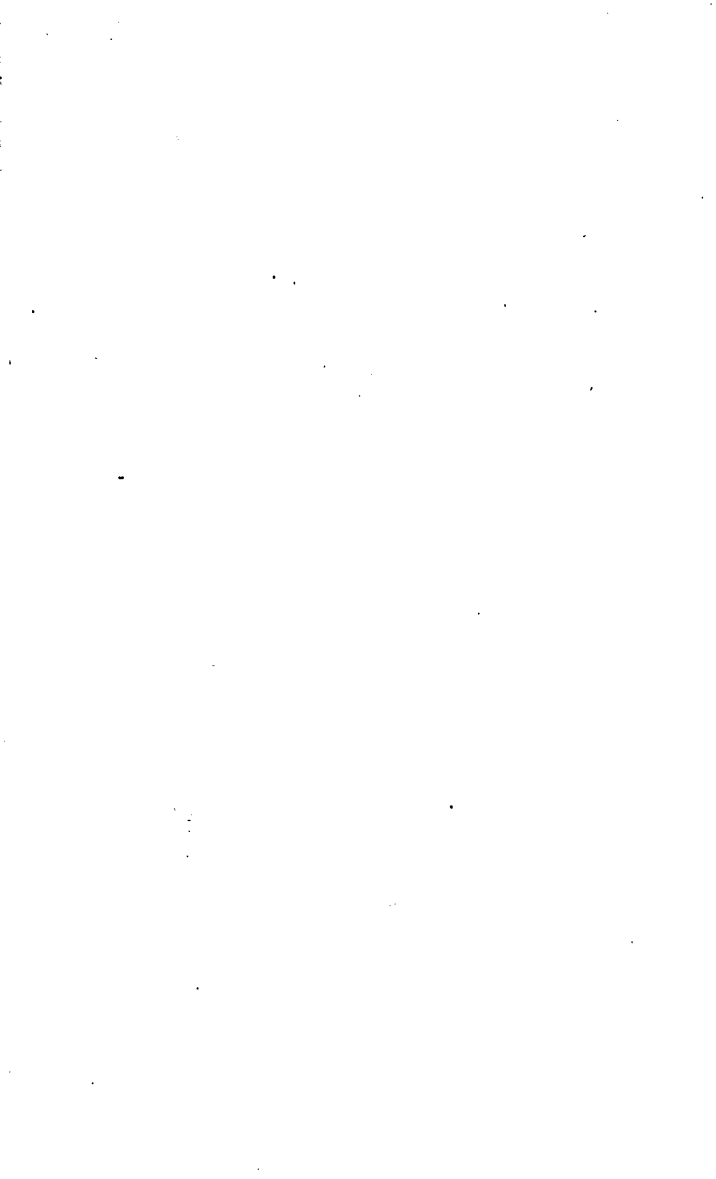


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1838







James Walter

POEMS,

39984

LONGER AND SHORTER;

BY

THOMAS BURBIDGE,

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,



LONDON:

WILLIAM PICKERING.

1838.

CHARLES WHITTINGHAM
LONDON

01-30-37 Jm

DEDICATION.

KNOWING well that these Poems, composed between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, will shew me their faults with every succeeding year more plainly, I prevent them from ever becoming distasteful to me by associating with them the names of my school-fellows and most dear friends :

JOHN PHILIP GELL.

CHARLES JOHN VAUGHAN.

JOHN NASSAU SIMPKINSON.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

THEODORE WALROND.

April, 1838.



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PREFATORY STANZAS.

As one that doth a little space delight
To lose himself in dread sepulchral glooms,
Deep caverns, haunts of chilly-finger'd Night ;
Or in the steamy blackness of old tombs
To watch the grave-flowers' melancholy blooms,
Spiting the free blue air and sunny sky ;
So the soul hangs some special-stately rooms
With sombre livery of old griefs gone by,
Prank'd with dead hopes, like flowers, garlanded
painfully ;

Yet ever from these rooms of sternest pleasure,
And lips locked up, and eye bent down in awe,
'Twill hurry back to its unguarded treasure
Safe in the keeping of earth's primal law ;
Diapered field, and lynch, and grassy shaw,
And mountain, and smooth hill, and ancient wood,
And all those things which shape and substance
draw

From that free breath of happiness and good,
Which overflows, like air, green Nature's solitude.

So have I dared, a careless voyager, leaving
My boat, upon the sunny bank to play;
Although meanwhile the silly skiff is cleaving
Towards life's hoarse whirlpools its ungoverned
way.

Well! let me loiter while the blooms of May
Spot the blue wave, and laugh along the shore;
Take ease, tired Arm, until a darker day!
Lie by and rest, my true and limber Oar,
Till sun and bank and flower tempt me to play no
more.

Then haply with a nerved and new endeavour
I may resume my labour, fit and free
With hardier stroke the sullen waves to sever,
And cut my passage to the final sea:
Yet not so burdensome the toil may be
But that at times the unbidden song may flow
From my wide lips, when leaning eagerly,
The bent oar springs and flashes as I go,
Flinging the sparkling foam in flakes like winter
snow.

—So spake I when my heart was hot with youth
Untempered; and my new Imagination
Deemed Beauty lovelier was than Right or
Truth;
And Duty, a dim moonish exhalation,
Lay idle on the sky of Contemplation,
A rayless mid-day crescent; and First Love,

A pure boy's love, hung in supremest station
Her luminous Star, a tender light which clove
Young passion's rosy clouds, not of them but above.

And so I wandered for six feverish years :
And boldly spread my boyhood's careless sail
Along the coasts of Smiles and Sighs and Tears
In turn ;—yea, deep in many a hidden vale
Of each, have tarried. But a cheek too pale,
And limbs too weak, and blood too quick or slow,
Give warning thence ere health and courage fail ;
Therefore be ended Fancy's dangerous shew,
Henceforth be God's own gifts enough of joy or
woe !

But not to Thee, sweet Poesy !—not to Thee,
Ethereal Spirit of Beauty, Love and Right,
Bid I herewith farewell. O, were I free
From thy blest bondage (—chains of sunny light
Which bind me night and morn, and morn and
night—)

Yet for the (1) Vision's splendour that hath been,
For Love made lovelier, Boyhood's self more
bright,

And Youth yet sharing thy resplendent sheen,
Still must I kneel to thee, my handmaid, spouse
and queen !

Thus only change I, that a higher sphere
Thou shalt henceforth inhabit,—calmer skies ;

The awfuller heights of Christian Hope and Fear,
The calmer heaven of Christian charities ;
This only if in His good will it lies,
Who is thy Master, as of all things good,
Mine, as of all things evil, weak, unwise !
Hence through the stress of every fickle mood,
Be Fancy's strength to His submitted and subdued !

THE BRIDAL OF RAVENNA.



THE BRIDAL OF RAVENNA.

A SONG ! a song !—there's no voice beside,
For the sun hath lain down on the green hill's
breast,

And the birds are idle and sleepy-eyed,
And the young lambs gone to rest ;
A song ! a song !—fo a welcoming
To the midnight hours approaching,
That the stirring voice of a living thing
May rise on the hush, like the green of spring
On the wintry woods encroaching.
Sing me a song—be it grave or gay,
From a sad or a joyful bosom,
To vibrate far in the leaves away,
Shaking the dew from the pine-tree spray
And the scent from the olive blossom !

Why spake he thus, that wild-eyed boy,
When he was all alone ;
Who there should wake in sorrow or joy
A glad or a mournful tone ?
Was there a choir of the wood nymphs old
Hid in the hollow trees,

Or deem'd the boy that his prayer was told
To the listening Naiades ?
There was a stream and an ancient wood,
But the days were past, I ween,
When the nymphs sang up thro' the bubbling flood,
Or laugh'd through the leafy screen.

Then was he in a rapturous dream,
Such dream as boyhood knows,
When the earth is fill'd with a golden gleam,
And the gates of heaven uncloze :
And we stand on earth 'mid an heavenly host
Who sing in an angel strain
Of the joyful things that our parents lost,
And their sons shall receive again ;
Of the love that is not o'erdarken'd with fears,
But, pure as the heaven it shadows,
Flows on unstained down the vale of years,
Like a brook through the laughing meadows ;
Of the faith that is not bought by guile,
But in innocent calm reposes,
By the young earth's joy made warm the while,
Like a clear lake winning a sunny smile
From the hue of its circling roses :
Was it to these he made his prayer,
That lonely boy at eve,
With his heart so still that he might not care
If the song should rejoice or grieve ?

Hush ! let Night repeat her tale,

Hear the answering nightingale !
Far and near the throbbing song
Rises, sinks or floats along !
Low or loud, serene, sedate,
Plaintive, peaceful, passionate ;
Shyly threads the darkened alleys,
Walled and roofed with scented leaves ;
Echoes down the swarded valleys ;
Climbs the feathered mountain-cleaves ;
Till upon the waters falling,
In its sad and sweet decay,
Dies in silence more enthralling
The delicious roundelay.

Where the shadow of Ravenna's wood
Is darker than the night,
Is built a bower, where Solitude
Might take his best delight ;
A nest-like dwelling in the arms
Of oak, and larch, and pine ;
Fit refuge, Sylvia, for charms—
Alas, and crimes like thine !

Bedded in branches deep and green
That lone tower's base is seldom seen,
And one small wicket rudely fixt
Two furrowed chestnut boles betwixt,
And one tall turret loftily
From far away espied,
Looming above the leafy sea

Of the tree-tops waving restlessly,
Like a rock across the tide,
Are all of visible works that stand
To tell that human heart or hand
Hath ever crossed the silent mood
Of the deep mid-forest's solitude.

Yet there are paths in that deep wood,
And meetings by the moon,
And hearts have yielded, ere they should,
Their best and dearest boon :
And love in light unholy guise
Hath there been asked and given,
When the stars have hid their lustrous eyes
And a veil has been over heaven.
'Twould take the tears of a hundred years
And a hundred years of prayer,
To cleanse the crime from the Book of Time
In a single night done there :
O woman so wicked and fair !
O youth so fiery-hearted !
When the sun grows dark in the mid-day sky,
Then will the lust of the lawless eye
From the pride of life be parted !

Yet among those who roam at eve
The thickets of that tainted wood,
Is one on whom all ill can leave
No trace of evil, save for good ;
In boyhood's spotless armour strong

To love the right and hate the wrong,
His heart like that Venetian glass
That broke if poison touched the brim,
Had sooner burst than there should pass
Or rest a tainted thought in him.
And though 'twas he whose signal son
So softly stole those woods along,
Yet not as others seek thy home,
When evening lifts the veil of shame,
And pleasure thrills the yielding frame,
Woman of sin, is Ser Marco come ;
Too young to know, too pure to guess
The story of thy wickedness,
Yet old enough to see and care
That love is sweet and thou art fair !

With a misty light the moon came out
As Marco struck the closing chords,
But the huddling notes run wild about,
And the singer's lip it gives no words ;—
Why are the lips so suddenly mute,
What hath possessed the foolish lute ?

Two forms stood there before his sight
Cut dark against the red fire-light ;
A female cheek was fondly press'd,
Too fondly for a simple guest,
A little word, " Away ! " was spoken,
And a spell was raised and a heart's thrall broken,
For Ser Marco seized his bridle rein,

And flung his lute upon the ground ;
And the stamp of hooves urged on amain
Died sooner from the echoing plain
Than the harp-string's jarring sound.

And Sylvia stood aghast awhile,
And then, as eased from deadly pain,
She smiled a sweet and sudden smile,
And spake the selfsame word again :
“ Away ! ” she said, and he, the guest,
Again her cheek as closely pressed ;
And went his way and ne'er returned ;
For a silence crept on his riotous breast
As he thought on the light so fierce and fell,
Like a gleam 'twixt the burning bars of hell,
In the Harlot's eyes that burned ;
And the voice that seemed some stranger's tone,
And not that too familiar one !

And Sylvia turned her then and knew
Within her lonely home,
That utter wretchedness which few
Have felt and overcome ;
It seemed as yet life's troubled wave
Had flowed beneath the sun,
But now was entered in a cave,—
How deadly dark an one !
Where all the light was from behind,—
Faint struggles of a failing mind
In grim convulsive glimpses setting

Upon the waters ebbing fast,
The horrible image of the past,
Seen truly only when at last
Is no repenting nor forgetting !
And love—for she had loved, and crime
Had been no hindrance but a goad,
That she might lighten for a time
The ever-growing load :
Love was with her but not to cheer ;
Her silence was but drearier,
That she possessed the magic viol,
Which could have charmed her griefs away,
And he alone would not make trial,
For whom the fickle strings would play.

And deem not that she could not know
The passion's warmest, fondest glow,
Because her soul no longer bore
The purer hue which once it wore.
O were it true, as some have said,
That love but grows in holy ground,
Where were the bitter harvest spread
So thick within us and around ?
They picture Love, in Indian tales,
An infant on a milkwhite flower,
That down the sacred river sails
At evening's quiet hour ;
There nestling in his pearly boat,
For ever lies the Power afloat ;
And all his play is, half-asleep,

To break the waves with frolic finger,
Or hunt the twinkling orbs that linger
Reflected in the soft blue deep;
But this is not the Love that mars
The stillness of Italian bosoms,
Though sailing midst as brilliant stars,
Among as odorous blossoms;
Oh no! the flower where he may lie
Must be some flower of deeper dye;
And oh! the stream he floats upon,
Too oft, alas! no hallowed one!

Marco forgot—'tis ever thus;
Days pass away with shower and shine,
With shower or shine alike bedimming
The picture once believed divine,
The full fair form and wild eyes swimming
In languor most luxurious.
Marco forgot his forest witch
Before a beauty more enchanting;
Eyes rolling in a light as rich,
As white a hand, as fair an arm,
All girdled by that only charm
In which his forest-love was wanting.
What wonder? Is't not ever so
That men should pluck and fling away?
The flowers our woodland path that strow,
The flowers that make our gardens gay,
Is't not their guerdon every day,
Common or choice, an hour or so

To charm and then be flung away ?
And 'tis the same with tenderer buds
Than fill the gardens or the woods,
That cannot be renewed by tending,
Replaced—refreshed—but when they die
Sink to a sleep that hath no ending,
And leave—how blank a vacancy !—
With hearts that have but one sweet blooming ;
And when their wreathen stems are spent,
Lie down content, or discontent,
Even as they know they die entombing
Their odours in their death, or keep
The thought that there is one will weep
The gracious memory of their scent.

A year has passed—but one short year ;
A little year of week and day,
And day and moment scarcely here,
Ere they were passed away ;
A year of these unnoticed hours
Had woven a dazzling veil that hung
Betwixt his eyes and those wild bowers
Which he so oft had roamed among,
Where he had seen and sued and sung
In passion's accents faintly clear,
The while the whispering atmosphere
Grew silent, and the shivering grass
And rocking boughs their rustling cheer,
Hushed for the vows to pass.
And if sometimes the tender blue

That dwells above the setting sun,
And love's white planet peeping through
When day is scarcely done ;
And spicy scent of forest leaves,
And trunks subdued with rosy light ;
And whispering sounds of summer eves,
And sweeter hush of summer night ;
And careless strings of loving rhymes,
On boyhood's waxen heart impressed,
Would make his bosom throb sometimes,
And spoil his joy and break his rest,
To Lyra's bower he would repair,
And lull his treacherous memory there.

The bridal day with every noon
Grew nearer ;—well I wot, the day
Fair Lyra said was all too soon ;
For robe and tire and trinketry
She needed a delay ;
But Marco said, “ Fair Lyra, I
Am thirsty for thy love ; O, pray
Let Thursday be our wedding day ;
To-morrow and to-morrow's peer
Will well suffice for bridal cheer.
Thou'rt conquered ? By thy golden hair
Confess, confess it, lady fair !”
And round his finger as he said
He curled one shining tress :
She cut the love-lock from her head,
And whispered, “ I confess !”

'Tis morn—the morn ; at dawn of day
The Italian sky, a sea of mist,
Of curling mist and vapours grey,
Above the earth in silence lay ;
Then softly, slowly, ray by ray,
The Sun those vapours kissed,—
Kissed into gold and rose-tints gay
And purpling amethyst.
And then the wind came up the south,
And on its way with balmy mouth
Breathed on the flowers, and every bud
Gave sweetest answer as it could ;
Faint odours some, but full and free
The fragrance of the orange-tree.

Young Marco lay, 'twixt sleep and waking,
Beside the casement on his bed,
While morning from its prison breaking,
Those joyous odours shed ;
Around him crept the burdened air,
And, like a voice of song,
A spell to rouse, a weight to bear,
At once so weak and strong,
That we are silent yet desire
To utter words, and words of fire,—
So wrapped that air the feverish boy
Sleepless for love and hope and joy
In anxious quiet long.
About the casement twist and twine
Thick tods of spicy jessamine,

An ancient tree that well might bear
A climber, like a turret stair,
So wreathed it is and thick,—so wide
Straggles the stem from side to side.
Then suddenly on Marco's face
Fell down a rustling shower apace
Of snowy blooms, a blissful shower,
A balmy rain of starry flower.

A moment he lay still, and deemed
'Twas but the wind ; but then a breath,
A slide, a step, a leap beneath,
Sounded, more stealthily it seemed
Than suited well for passing jest
To chide a bridegroom's lingering rest.

Then up he sprang in time to see
An urchin gliding from the tree,
A wild-eyed boy, whose Nubian race
Was written on his dusky face ;
And Marco guessed whose ministry
He served, for well he knew the glance
That lit that wildest countenance,
And oft in days of old would try
With kindly gestures to engage
The wayward heart of that strange boy—
Serendib, Sylvia's tongueless page.

Ser Marco called—in vain !—the mute
Pursued his path with fleetest foot ;
And soon his course was lost to view

In stately groves of arching yew,
An ominous spot where grandames told
A spirit wont to watch his gold,
And blast the careless human eye
That pried into the mystery.

A moment Marco's gaze hung still
In thought upon the empty air,
Then dropped upon the marble sill :—
Why starts he ? what is there ?
In haste he broke the silken thread,
And thus with greedy eyes he read :

“ If thou shouldst breathe,” the writing ran,
“ This scroll's import to mortal man
’Tis death !—but not alone to thee,
On me as well the doom must be ;—
Me—me once loved :—yet if thou wilt,
No matter—so not mine the guilt.
But to the work. To-night at noon
A shadow will o’erdrive the moon ;
Mark !—note it !—call thy guests to see,
Then in the tumult steal to me.
Watch well the hour—I need not pray,
Nor kneel, nor supplicate to-day,
But I command thee !—in the gloom
Of those wild yew trees round the tomb
I wait thee—by the pending doom,
By her thou lovest more than me,
False Marco, now I summon thee !”

Let pass the day with all its train
Of painful bliss and blissful pain ;—
Let pass the rite that bound together,
For all the turns of life's wild weather,
Those two young hearts with that strong chain
Which cannot be unlinked again :
Let pass the tumult and the tears,
The throng of bridal hopes and fears,
The quivering heart of glad unrest,
Nor be the song required to speak
The blush on gentle Lyra's cheek,
Or the pang in Marco's breast !

The eve slid down—the stars came forth,
And dance and song, and speech of mirth :
The odours fell from flower and tree,
And the young cheek glowed more lovelily.
The night waned fast. Fair Lyra's glance
Dwelt on her husband's countenance ;
With wonder watched his restless laughter,
And the moody look and the silence after,
And the stealthy gaze to where she sate
Enthroned amid her bridal state.
She left her seat—she sought his ear,
She told her wonder and her fear—
Whose word is that so harsh and cold ?
The bridegroom's not a midnight old !

The moon came forth—in silvery showers
The lustre fell upon the bowers.

The blooms that had been lost to view
Sprang straightway from the dusk anew ;
And yet so changed and pale their hue,
It seemed they left their joyous look
Among the shadows they forsook.
Once bright and warm, now cold and grey
Glooms forth the white magnolia ;
An ominous light the myrtle throws ;
A leaden look is in the eye
Of the o'er-blazed anemomy ;
A look of languor on the rose :
The jasmine frowns with starry brows
Along the wall ;—the clematis
Flings wildly to the night-wind's kiss
Its pallid tendrils, light and free,
A ghostly splendour filled the boughs
Of every waving orange tree.
It seemed to more than Marco's eye
Some feverish motion in the sky
Made all those flowers so dull and sere,
And coloured that wan atmosphere.
But few were there had time to gaze,
And save light jests among the maze,
Of circling dances gaily given,
Marked none the marvel of the heaven.

The hour drew on—and Marco's breath
Grew hard—his lip more pale than death,
When gliding through the careless throng,
Enamoured of some breathless song,

Into a dimly-curtained nook
His stealthy way in haste he took,
Where 'neath an arch of fretted stone
He stood to watch the moon alone.

Is he too late?—a strange dark shroud
Is on her face—no summer cloud !
A wild unearthly gloom is there,
No passing film of murky air !
A shade most like that shade obscure
That mortal things must all endure,
Which spares the likeness to erase
The mind and meaning of the face !
Is he too late ? A dazzling thread
Yet lives upon the eastern rim—
Grows momentarily that light more dead,
'Tis midnight !—and the whole is dim.
Then Marco from his dark retreat
Sprang forth ;—as on some jest intent,
He crossed the hall with footsteps fleet,
And low before his bride he bent ;
With frolic glance he prayed a boon,
'Tis granted, and he led her forth ;—
They leave the gaily-lit saloon,
They stand beneath the darkened moon ;
With what wild flights of careless mirth,
As on they press and forth they fare,
Frets that gay throng the quiet air
And the deep-sleeping earth !

All eyes were upward turned save two
And whither they? Fair Lyra knew.
“Forgive me, O my life! my Heaven!”
He whispered: gladly Lyra heard;
She deemed he meant that hasty word,
And answered, “Love, thou art forgiven!”
Then one long kiss he claimed and won,
His first—his last!—and he was gone!
And though his presence Lyra missed,
She deemed not of that fatal tryst,
But thought among his guests he paid
Some needful service ill delayed.

With fleetest foot Ser Marco trod
O'er terrace, stair, and velvet sod:
The lights behind his course were lost
As bower and sward in turn he crossed;
But still so near the spot he sought
The laughter to his ear was brought.
At length before the dome he stood
Where slept the heroes of his blood;
The stone above, the yews around,
Not wrapt in quiet more profound.
To Marco's eye the spot seemed bright,
With somewhat of a spectral light,
So clear the dome its wan shade threw
On those dark boughs of stately yew.
In awe he bent a moment's space
Before the spirit of the place;
Then thought of his endangered love;

And threading hastily the grove,
Stood before Sylvia face to face.

Upon a stone o'ercrept with moss
She sate—her features told the loss
Of youth, and health gone long before,
And there it seemed some deadly cross
Had passed and wrought what never more
Might youth or love or health restore.
With something of a sybil look
Her staff upon the stone she strook,
And, moving nearer to the tomb,
For Marco at her side made room.
No word was utter'd as they sate :
The love, the fear, the mortal hate
Were quenched in silence for a while ;
Then slowly, with a darkening smile
That curled her features fiercely fair,
And in her eye an aspic glare,
Her arm round Marco's waist she passed,
Her arm, but not her arm alone :
No statue on its base of stone
Was ever fixed more fast !
In vain he strives—for brazen bands
Have clasped upon his waist and hands.

“ Now, prisoner, hear ! my love, of old,
And still my love, if all be told,
And why dissemble ? Prisoner dear,
And but for *thy* sake prisoner,

Now hear me ! In Ravenna's wood
How thou hast knelt and sung and sued
Bethink thee ;—let those eves of joy
Return, and be again a boy !
Think of those eves,—the stars that shone
While we pursued our path alone ;
Think of the fragrant dewes that rose
To meet the odours from the bough ;
And think of every flower that glows
Unheeded in that shelter now :
Think of it all—that blissful moon
That sparkled through those leaves of gold ;
And see her now !—I know full soon
She will rekindle as of old
To one of us—my wrongs were loth
(My love how glad) to say to *both* ;
Think of all this and why it ceased,
Why fell the glory from the bough,
Why wanly as yon orb diseased
My moon of life shines alway now ;
Think of it all !—thy love that died,
My love that ever must remain,
Then think that still the forest side
May echo to that mirth again,—
May—if thou will'st—that what thy guilt
Hath levelled may be yet rebuilt ;
Think that the memory of thy crime,
Which yet, I know, at eventime,
When the chestnut odours float about,
And all those well known stars are out,

Grows dark about thy heart, to dull
The bright, and blast the beautiful ;
That all this wound may yet grow o'er,
And both be happy as before :
Think, then, think slowly, and decide,
If thou hast courage to resign
This frozen love, this pallid bride,
And once again be mine, but mine ! ”

Ill weened the dame how that last word
Would steel the soul of him that heard :
His cheek had changed with every tone,
And with the last, it seemed, to stone.
In memory's depths beneath the spell
The pleasant past had shone, how well !
His wild first love,—his childhood's joy,—
The bliss that hung about the boy ;
And Sylvia's self as then she shone,
A glory which unto the earth
Had come, yet seemed her native throne,
The privilege of loftier birth,
To hold, and but be here a space,
While yet the Heaven prepared her place :
That Sylvia yet was at his side
Whom boyhood's passion glorified ;
And who should save him once again
From yielding to the siren's strain ?
The assailant lent him his defence,
He thought of Lyra's innocence :
And as he thought, stirred Memory's waves

Fell back in silence to their caves ;
And then he raised his burning cheek,
And thus he nerved himself to speak :

“ It cannot be ! ”—the words fell forth
Upon the air like lead on earth ;—
“ It cannot be ! ”—her moisten'd eye
Grew hard and brighter as he spoke—
“ It cannot be,—although I die,
My Lyra.”—Forth the tempest broke :
“ Enough ! ” she cried,—“ no more !—and I
At last am lightened from the yoke !
Now watch,—watch well—as well as thou
Couldst watch the tryst thou keepest now.
Poor, blind, caged fool, that saw'st the snare
Spread for thee, yet art captive there ! ”
She clapped her hands—with silent foot
Stood at her side the Nubian mute.
Then calmly from her girdle's fold
A fragrant box of carven gold
She drew, and to the tongueless slave
A folded paper thence she gave.
She spake no word of death or doom,
She only said,—“ Thou know'st for whom ! ”

No notice ta'en, no farewell said,
She pass'd away ; the lamp she bore
Lay in its ashes sere and dead :
No matter ! Marco saw no more ;
Like some cut plant that falls and dies

Across a lustier branch, he lies,
A drooping weight upon the bands
That held his waist and lifeless hands.

Meanwhile among the myrtles blooming
That giddy rout pursued their way ;
The scents the midnight air perfuming,
Not lighter than their hearts and they :
Who'll tell the terror and dismay
That filled the crowd of late so gay,
When servants hither, thither sent
By Lyra's fearful discontent,
Threaded the throng all round and round,
And absent Marco was not found ?
Through portals wide the anxious tide
Poured back into the festal rooms ;
To Lyra's sight not all that light
The chambers' empty space illumes :
A sickening doubt, a freezing thrill,
A deadly sense of coming ill,
Checks every vein, and binds the breath
In languor well nigh deep as death ;
And but her brother's arm upbore,
The bride had fallen upon the floor.

Upon a couch young Servio placed
His fainting sister still embraced ;
Then came the prayers, advice, commands,
Scents, waters from a hundred hands ;
From whose doth eager Servio take

The draught her deadly thirst to slake ?
Whose are those eyes of stifled rage
Fierce as the tiger's in his cage ?
—Serendib's, Sylvia's tongueless page !

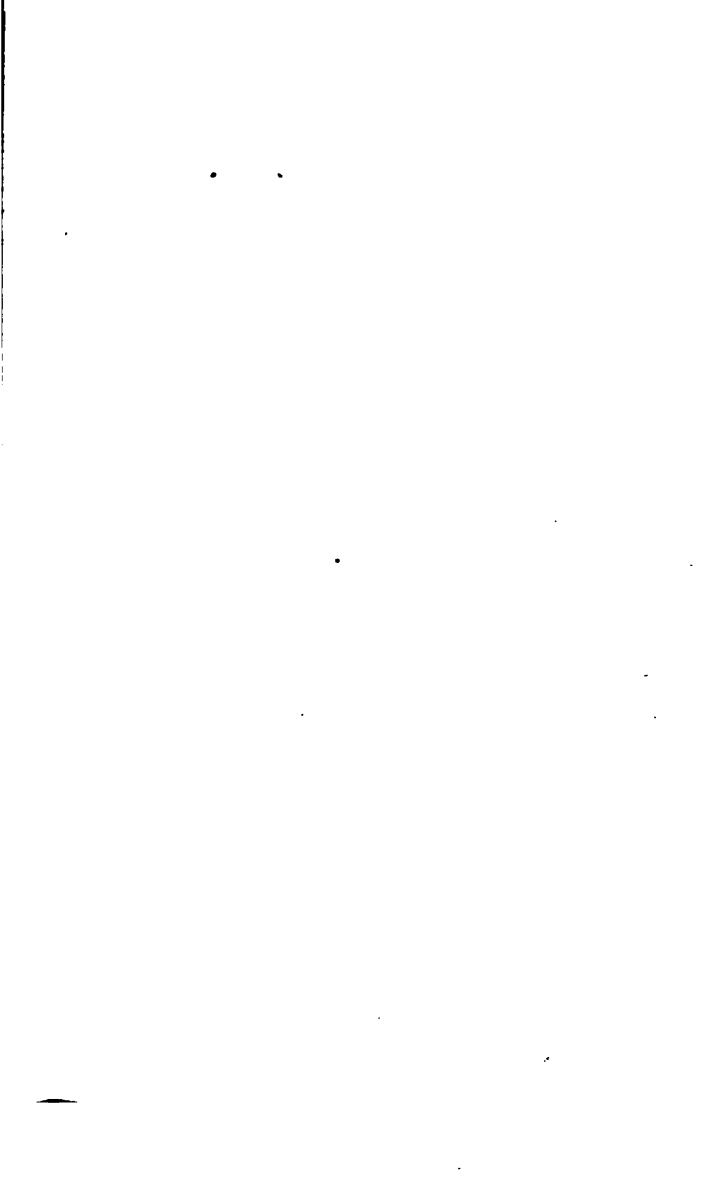
But whose that shriek that fills the air
With the fierce music of despair ?
'Tis Marco's voice ! but where, oh, where ?
They sought, they loosed, they led him back,
It seemed he did not know the track ;
They brought him to that hall so bright,
What sees he by that blaze of light ?
His weeping guests, an empty cup,
And Lyra's features covered up !

Who knows some quiet English home
Where peaceful pleasures only come,
Where home-bred joys, like evening flowers,
Are sweetest in the darkest hours,
And whose few clouds of undelight
With hope's glad rainbow still are bright ;
Is there therein some ardent boy
Whose soul is sick for fiercer joy,
Who longs to knit the purple vine
About his brows in verdant bands,
And sit beneath the gloomy pine,
And woo the maids of other lands ;
And claim in warmer climes than this
His kindred to the natives there ;
And soar upon such wings of bliss,
Or sink into the same despair ;

O let him tarry and beware !
And be't enough some cousin's hair
To twine, some sister's lips to kiss !
Sweet is the murmur of the lute
In hands familiar with the chords ;
And beautiful the vine in fruit ;
And sweet to hear the lover's suit
Poured forth in soft Italian words ;
And yet as sweet the song may be
Flung lightly from an English bosom ;
The English lover's tale less free
As glad to hear ;—the apple tree
As beautiful in blossom !
And let him know, and know in time,
While longing for those brighter bowers,
How oft the hidden serpent's slime
Lies deadly on the fairest flowers ;
And if too trite such words as these
To overcome his fancy's ease,
O let him think, when by the hearth
He sits upon some Christmas eve,
And round him beams that peaceful mirth
Which he with home must leave ;
When glad without as those within,
The village troop beside the door
Their carol sing, their guerdon win,
Yet happier still than poor ;
There let him think, if he would miss
A single hour of this true bliss,
Such dangerous raptures to essay
As Marco, Lyra, Sylvia.

M N E M E I O N.

Alitis in parvæ * * * * collecta figuram,
Quæ quondam in bustis aut culminibus desertis
Nocte sedens, serum canit importuna per umbras.



INTRODUCTORY SONNET.

GREEN Hope, and rosy Love, and prickly Passion,
Pale Peace, and mottled Doubt, and Yellow Fear,
And black Despair, in fanciful mourner's fashion
Are wrought by me into a garland here ;
A chaplet for the brows of my cold Love,
Whereof, the body dead, the soul yet liveth ;
Or else to hang in mindful state above
The secret grave which all dead things receiveth
So that the comers-by may look thereon
And say, ' Of price was that which here decayeth,
For much more love than best encârven stone
This uncouth twine of common flowers betrayeth.'
Wherefore because it blooms for memory,
Mnemeion naming it, I would it so might be.

MNEMEION.

I.

TARRY, soft west-wind journeying from the sea
To the green midland shades, and hear a boon
Which a fond fancy-stricken prays of thee !
Abide, abide and list, O lady Moon,
That walkest slowly with thy golden shoon
The immortal paths !—O hear me, gentle May,
Wreathing thy tresses with sweet thefts from
June!—

And ye, blue dancing waters, O delay
A little space ere yet ye hasten on your way !

Now over garden walls come sweet mild smells,
Like the free notes of prisoned birds ; and bees
Sway lightly in the balanced lily bells ;
And pearly spires upon the chesnut trees
Shoot up ; and gently in the loitering breeze,
That lazily wandering down the roofed walks
(As 'twere a lover) takes a moody ease,
Golden laburnums shake their pendant stalks ;
And in a soft spring voice the crystal runnel talks.

The grass is cool to him who rests thereon,
And if a man one midnight there should lie,—

One short spring midnight,—when the slant
dawn shone,
Lost were to him the purple eastern sky;
A wall of grass, uplifted gradually
To night's soft music, were about his head,
Nor aught of earth might that glad prisoner spy
Save his green bound, wherethro' is blithely shed
A hum of happy things, whose loves are being sped.

And now, O Nature, hear me what I pray!
Run not thou by, until thy ministers,—
Flowers, winds, yon lustrous moon, and the soft
play
Of flashing waves, and every thing that stirs
Unto forgetting of the primal curse,
Have won my love, like me, to meet the night;
So, as in my heart, it may be, in hers
Sweet Nature winning, she may half requite
Mine unrewarded care, if not with words, with sight.

II.

One more look on thee, love, before I slumber!
That I may dream and in my sleep be blest,
Counting the dewy ringlets without number
By which thy delicate temples are caressed.
One more!—a very short one, loveliest,
For fear I sleep not, and my heated brain
Too deeply with thine image be impressed,—

And how should that be ?—And how not ? again,
Ah me ! I am a fool twisting a doubled chain.

True, I will see thee in my dreams to-night.
How shall it be, love ? As the young-eyed
Spring

Set in a sweet air of the tender light
Of wood-walks when the limes are blossoming,
And the mute throat of every creeping thing
Fills with a chirp of love ? Or wilt thou be
A spirit alit on earth, whose ears yet ring
With the spheres' music, in the mystery
Of a new world astray—is this how thou wilt be ?

I'll give thee wings—a rosy pair of pinions
Softer than cushion young love's way athwart
The yielding ether's summer-soothed dominions
When he brings pity to some mourning heart,
And hued like infant's cheeks when the lips part
In mild day-slumber ; such, so soft and fair,
The wings I will provide thee by mine art ;
Tell me, wilt kiss me, love, for such a pair ?
Nay, lady chaste and proud, thou art too froward
there !

Or I'll imagine thee a new-scaped soul
Yet betwixt earth and heaven, and thou shalt swim
On filmy clouds whose opal wreaths shall roll
Round thee, like music round the cherubim :—
Upward, and upward, till thine eyes wax dim

And dewy with the bliss for ever growing,
Shalt thou float softly, till the immortal hymn
Enter thine ears, and heaven's own roof be
 glowing
O'er thee from glory still to inner glory going.

Or stay !—a Lamb I will devise thee rather,
A snow-white feeder in some elmy nook,
For whom a band of children small shall gather
Pale flowers, the nurslings of some gentle brook,
Such tints as earth pour'd when the first sun
 strook
Her bosom from the flood set newly free,
And she arose unto the light (2) and shook
The flood-drift from her face,—all such for thee
Patiently lying still, in love shall gathered be.

Or say, wilt rather as a Dove be nested
In the soft umbrage of a willow tree,
While round thee, by the saucy breeze molested,
The (3) green leaves whiten ever restlessly,
As a bird's breast is ruffled, or the sea
Frowardly cresting to the south wind's kisses ;
There wilt thou lie half sleepy, while the free
Wind peeping on thee now and then addresses
A soft speech to thine ear and some few kind ca-
 resses ?

Or shall the waters be a silver way
Which thou shalt honour as a regal Swan ;

A creature like the Spirit of the Day ;
Or some proud visiter from ages gone,
Whose crest its crown of praise bears calmly on
Down the stirred waters of a thousand years,—
So on the azure waves all white and wan,
Shall thy pure beauty pay the heart's arrears
Of joy delay'd or lost, and recompense for tears ?

Or stay ! O fancy, lend me but thy fingers
To pluck yon star from the irradiate blue !—
Yon lovely star !—amid the clouds it lingers,
The darling of the heavens, where the faint hue
Of the cloud is tricksiest and the sky *most* blue.
Rosy and tremulous, now the bashful Splendour
Faints and is lost ;—and now 'tis bright anew,
O richest heaven ! O greedy depths ! surrender
That Star for my love's masque, so passing pure and
tender !

O love, how fondly from these frolic dreams
I come to thee again !—thy human eyes
Are dearer than a thousand starry beams ;
If I say fairer also, who denies ?
Yet as a wave in fondness multiplies
The image of the flower it loves the best,
My fancy dallies with the shape that lies
Most loved and deepest printed on my breast,
And thou art she—that shape, my own ! my love-
liest !

Therefore I figure thee a Swan, a Dove,
A Star—nay, any thing as fancy changes ;
And as a child I play with my sweet love ;
Dressing it up as fickle humour ranges ;
And no wild masque, however strange, estranges
Thy true looks from me—say, thou art a Star,
I see thine eye,—a Dove, the flickering changes
Of thy stirred locks,—a Swan, thy gracious air ;
Somehow I picture thee in all things pure and fair !

III.

Easy it is for them whose hearts are light
With answered love undoubtful, to declare,
Sitting beside her on the summer night,
The pain which for their lady's sake they bear ;
Knowing that she will toss her ringed hair
Upon their upturn'd eyes in bashful play,
But far, far different 'tis for me who bear
Cold words unperished in my breast always,
To chill my dreams by night—to chill my thoughts
by day.

There is much prudence in the world, I know ;
And many a one hath said that thou didst well
The heart that dared so early buds to shew
With the cold frosting of thy frowns to quell ;—
And told in pride the evil day that fell

On souls too early mated,—heart-warmth spent
Ere the sharp winter times unshunnable
Came o'er the downy cheek, or discontent
Far worse, of struggling hearts with later passion
bent.

I cannot reason, love, with such as these :
I cannot think of hearts like thine and mine
With the pure spring of unstrained sympathies
O'erfilled and sated ;—nor conceive the shrine
Where now in simpleness and grace divine
Our Virgin Love is set, all throned and crowned,
To the foul worship of an idol sign
Estranged, before whose face upon the ground
Drunk with habitual crime, meek conscience lieth
bound.

Listen, love, listen to the fondling sea !
How to his cradled islets half-awake
He whispers of the wondrous things that be
Hid in his bosom ; how the great Sea-drake
With lithe, enringed neck his path doth make
Among the yielding mosses lank and soft
Which line the deep ; or how a vast ship's wake
Will send a white and flickering shade full oft
Across the grey sea-floor, glimmering from far aloft.

Or listen to the woods,—how each to each
The wedded boughs of interwoven pines (4)
Do mutter peacefully a gentle speech :

And fond festoons of wild unberried vines
Thrill audibly through all their thousand twines
For the deep love that binds them ; and the leaves
Of nearing elms a mute response of signs
Yield, as the lovelorn bird his voice upheaves,
Mounting, as a climber strong, the shelfless, chal-
ken cleaves.

Or look on mother earth with her green vest
Folded about her, as her head is bent
In the mild majesty of perfect rest ;
And breath so pure 'twould seem a wandering
scent
From the pure stars so delicately shent
Upon the purple heaven, and not a boon
Made up of all her many treasures blent,
Young buds, quick waters, sweating leaves of
June,
And trails of long white flowers blossoming aneath
the moon.

Now, love, as these are, is thy heart and mine,
Calm and yet lifeful,—still, yet full of love ;
For purity and passion in one twine
Commingle bind us both, and from above,
Below, around, on stealthy pinions move
All influences of the world,—the main
Paternal, and the motherly earth, the grove
In spousal bondage knitted, to complain
That we bend not, as they, to nature's three-linked
chain.

IV.

Now with this lovely eve comes back to thee
The heart, an idle truant all day long ;
Call it no rebel, though sometimes it flee :
No ! sweet the bondage as the chain is strong.
But in the elbowings of the noisy throng
There is no calm for holiness like thine,
There is no issue for the murmurous song ;
And 'twere not nature for a love like mine
To shew its buds where all their scentless garlands
twine.

Then thou art left within my heart's recesses,
As is a Relic in its shrine of gold,
Which from its sacred privacy impresses
A holier awe than aught which we behold ;
So lies thine image in my heart's safe fold
When day with its thick din of unknown tongues
Confuses the jarred spirit ;—when the wold
Grows shadowy, and the tumult of rude songs
Is hushed,—oh ! then to thee the unchallenged hour
belongs.

But now 'tis ceasing, the rude noise of day :—
Its clouds are breaking from yon hilly chain,
And, wreath by wreath, the dim mists curl away

And yon uncovered summit wears again
Its crest of nodding trees : and the long plain
Stretches below it, calm and clear and green,
Which all day long with reeking streams of rain
Lay like a lake at evening ; all the scene
Lies bare that was but caught the rolling haze between.

The sky grows clear and diamond-pure and bright
Up to its crown ; and in the dewy west
The hills stand black against the rosy light,
Like Life's dark years on Fancy's sky impest ;
And the far east is drawing on its vest
Of shadow, and makes ready for the dark ;
And overhead full many a timid guest
Scarce ventures on the eye, a tremulous spark,
Which upon midnight's brow will stand, a burning mark.

Now look !—One flash ! 'Tis past. The darkness throws

Each moment a new shade upon the air—
Upon the stars new fire. Again it goes
Dancing along the hill-tops, fierce and fair
The arrowy lightning-flash. Behind the glare
The sky grows sickly-pale ; the earth below
Gleams like some subterranean land laid bare,
Red with black shadows. Ever to and fro
Run on the burthened air faint moaning murmurs low.

Like spirits' voices in their prisons, are
The sounds—a discontented dismal song ;
And earth lies still in awe, and every star
Trembles in heaven as they pass along.
And all the music of the heavenly throng
(Not heard on earth, though well perceived to be)
We feel, is silent,—as some passion strong
Will still the inarticulate melody
Which dwells in human hearts, as motion in the sea.

Now how with every shade on Nature's cheek
Is link'd some thought of thee ! Morn, noon and
 night
With sun and moon and sunny stars all speak
Some token of love's pain or love's delight ;
So justly unto thee doth Earth requite
The joy to thee and thy fair beauty owing ;
And now this lightning flash its livid light
Down the great depths of recollection throwing,
Lights up one little gem, as daylight warm and
 glowing.

'Twas thus. Dost mind one sultry summer eve
When thou and I, like children, as we were,
Sate still to see the restless lightnings cleave
The insensate blackness of the upper air ?
Long time upon the imbowered garden chair
We sate, betwixt the trails of hanging bells,
Watching the silent fires dart every where,
And fade and flicker, as a flood that swells
And ebbs in turn, all down the darkened dells.

Dost mind how the black rifts and in the fern
The jagged teeth of rock would suddenly shine
Like pillars and deep wells of fire in turn ;
The while the trees with wan sad light divine
Glimmered, a ghastly crowd—sepulchral pine
And monumental oak ablaze together ;
And the still water glanced, a burning line,
From us to where 'twas quench'd by the black
ether,—

Love, dost thou mind that eve of sultry summer
weather ?

Then mind this too : awhile the silent flashes
Played lightly, broad and harmless—then a sound
As 'twere the echoes of a thousand crashes
Of mountain-summits tumbling all around
Brake out, as one blue crooked flame i' th' ground
(Just at our feet it seemed) did root its blaze,
A tree of fire ! (5)—but thou, love, in a swoond
Of fear, didst clasp me in a close embrace,
Hiding at my fond heart thy cold discoloured face.

I tell thee not how throbbed my startled heart
Within her cave at that unlooked-for guest ;
How hope's closed doors were suddenly flung
apart ;—

I tell not how at memory's still behest
Came flying (fairy troop) unto my breast
From the illuminate air of other years
A thousand passages of regard,—request,

Remembrance, look, word, accent ; each appears
Like a sweet soft-eyed bird borne from serener
spheres.

And as from some lit wood of tenderest green
The birds at sunrise hurry to the sun,
So from the covert of the deep Has-been
Trooped thither those glad memories, many a one :
Oh ! lady, what a lovely unison
Their mingled voices made : the rosy domes
O' th' foxglove echo no serener tone
When fairies feast—no mightier music comes
From the Æolian winds, locked in their rocky
homes.

V.

Nay, find not heart to say that word ' begone ! '
No—let me read it, if it must be read,
In thy most voiceful eyes. 'Tis done, 'tis done !
And now in peace from very deepness bred
Of my great loss, I quietly am led
From the dead presence of my mighty woe,
Even like a speechless Parent from the bed
Where his best flower in sudden overthrow
Lies like a perishing shape of unsubstantial snow.

Now is earth changed and heaven:—in the track
Where the stars ride along the bending sky,
Dark shapes are set in council—on the black
In blacker blackness shadowed, I espy
Fierce scowling feature and enthralling eye,
And on myself is every look bent down;
I could believe that devils reigned on high,
And sate on watch with that malignant frown
To drive the hopeful back, to keep the despairing
down.

Beautiful stars, with your eternal wreath
Binding the forehead of the midnight sky!
Moon, on thy central throne! and thou, sweet
breath
Of earth's first murmurous slumber, stealingly
Frosting the bright blue vault; O tell me why
Doth such strange power to human hearts belong,
That one tone there of doubtful harmony,
One string, as now this one in mine, set wrong,
Can break with that faint jar all Heaven's accordant
song?

On! on!—and wherefore on? Like one whose
tread

Is down a gloomy rent betwixt great hills
Which join their butting fronts above his head,
So look I down mine avenue of ills;
Save that a darker dread my bosom fills;

Save that for me no spark of lovely light
Shines starlike at its end, but blind depth chills
The sickening heart and feeble, shrinking sight
At that unshelved abyss of hopeless, endless night.

Hist ! hist !—the music ! Now the melody
Walks, like a conqueror, up the silent air,
That quivers to his footstep, as the sea
That trembles when the tyrannous winds walk
there.

And now again with soothing whisper fair
’Twould seem it deftly won a willing way
Across the flattered deeps, whose waves upbear
Now with fond art his frolicsome delay,
As erst in dread they cowered beneath his fiercer
sway.

And now ’tis gone !—the echoes to their caves
Have slunk, like truant children ; and the air
Hath gathered into rest its thousand waves.
And now “ the presence of my great despair ”
Flings once again its shadow every where,
Ev’n as before. O momentary gleam !
Mocking the darkness ’tis my lot to bear,
Come not again with thy deluding beam,
To make my night of fate more dark and hideous
seem.

And now again, O moon, and stars, and sky !

Ye islet clouds !—thou ether-sea between !
And ye, green trees, who knit your boughs on
 high,
Making a pillared aisle across the green ;
Yea ! all thou earth so holy and serene,
Scarce breathing for deep sleep that locks thee in,
And music, fit companion of such scene,
Why are ye fair, if this small heart within
From all your soothing spells such easy freedom
 win ?

VI.

Yea ! a strange thing is this our human heart,
And like a lute, which jars, or in shaped words
Yields its sweet soul, as ignorance or art
Nicely or rudely stirs the fickle chords ;
So our coy breast its joy or pain affords,
As with attent beseechings and soft prayers,
Or the harsh fingering of unkindly words,
Men, or ourselves, require its gentle airs,
Wherewith to link our joys or drown our noisy cares.

Yet not alone are human fingers free
To wake its subtle music. Nature's hand
Will oft-times win it to a gentle glee,
Which mortal artist may in vain demand ;

And oft recal it to a tone more bland,
When strained by man to discord. So, sweet
breeze,
Child of so fair an evening, hast thou fanned
My thrilling heart to something nearer peace,
Though I could yet be glad its notes might wholly
cease !

And yet 'tis treason to so fair an even
Such words to utter, or such wish to keep !
I do repent me, glowing cope of heaven,
Before thy beauty bending, not to weep,
Though I were fain, so clearly in the deep
Of mine own soul is thy sad loveliness
Reflected, mingling in its tideless sleep
Like a sweet, sorrowful dream ; yet not the less
Sweet, that 'tis full of tears and tearful tenderness.

Aye ! 'tis the fitter that, in looking round me,
Earth, sea, and sky should all alike produce
But fresh mementoes that the chain hath bound me
Which mortal finger may no more unloose.
The moon, encircled with her silver dews,
Looks down in tears upon the mournful sea ;
And earth with dim and shadowy smile pursues
Her own sad thoughts, the saddest of the three,—
Sisters in one strait bond of sorrowfullest sympathy.

Now wherefore is it that the mute world changes
Ev'n as we change ?—that we must ever fling,

From grief to grief as our vexed spirit ranges,
Our own black shadow on each happy thing,—
Throw darkness on the lustrous eye of Spring,
And with the echo of our own sad voices
Instruct the little summer birds to sing,
And dull with our grave tread all merry noises
At which old Autumn laughs, and Winter's self
rejoices?

So if the moon, most like a stranded boat,
Lies bedded in the solid-seeming blue,
Ever I read the emblem, and I note
My own sunk heart enshadowed in the view;
Or if the stars be thin and pale and few
Upon the desert firmament, I yield
To that sad picture still a meaning due,
And deem I see my own life's barren field
Starred with a few faint flowers, low, dim, and half-
concealed.

Or if, more bright than at the host's assembling
To the black banner of the still midnight,
Just at eve's fall, the crystal heavens are trem-
bling
Round the lone lustre of one glorious light,
Then,—*then*, oh, how may I aread the sight?
Thou knowest, who hast been to my life's sky
What that star is to heaven,—yet none aright
Can tell its comfort while it sate on high,
And none the horror of its fading off but I.

Thus ever back to thee, sweet Fount forbidden,
The river of my thoughts will fondly glide ;
Its waves with lustre from thy light beridden,
Its flood with waters from thy depth supplied :
Glassing no loveliness within its tide,
But overflowing with indwelling light,
Thus on it rushes in its lonely pride
Through herbless banks, beneath a starless night,
Yet ever from its source made pure and clear and
bright !

'Tis a proud spectacle a lonely river
Beneath a weight of black and sensible air
Forcing his strong resistless way for ever :
'Tis a proud sight, "when all the heavens are
bare,"
To see the moon so queenly cold and fair
In uncompanioned might ride sternly on :
'Tis proud to watch the Sun's strong arm down-
bear
The writhing clouds : but there is pride in none
As in a mortal man who walks through life alone.

Let such a one—and such a one am I,
And thou hast made me so—where Earth is set
Crowned with the crown of all her majesty,
There let him stand—yet may he not forget
His pride, nor veil his fading coronet
One instant to the imperishable crown !

Or let him go where all the hosts are met
On the thronged sky,—and he will not bend down
Nor loose one iron link of his eternal frown !

Then having thus bemocked' the earth and sky,
Go, set him on an island in the main,
Where the great sea may gaze with terrible eye
Into his heart of hearts,—and note again
With what a proud and masterful disdain
The unconquerable soul will hold its own ;
He will but closer to his bosom strain
The mail whereto his festered flesh hath grown,
So mighty is his will to do and be alone !

Aye ! so it is !—yet 'twas not always so :
I can remember yet the summer eves,
When I have kneeled unto the rosy glow,
Which lay, like love, upon the breathless leaves,
And the green grass, and the encrimsoned
 cleaves,
And the long waves that could not break for
 pleasure,
And the lit windows under far white eaves,
And bright sand glittering like a golden trea-
 sure,
And all that filled brimful my boyhood's mighty
 measure.

And not the summer eves alone could win
My heart to worship, but amid the still

Of middle noon, when earth for bliss holds in
Her breath, a sudden rushing rapturous thrill
My bursting veins with running flame would
fill ;

So, drunk with joy, I would close up my eyes
Till little bird, light leaf, and pattering rill,
With gentle force that silence would surprise,
And swell their mingled din up to the throbbing
skies.

And when the moon with light most rich and
tender

Filled the abysses of the purple sky,
My soul seemed sharer of the golden splendour,
Filled and o'erflooded with as warm a dye :
And through its chilliest depths and caves most
shy

(Though none as yet were wholly cold or dark)
The cheerful lustre ran as suddenly,
And in that light the kindly eye might mark
A few warm hopes that flashed with faint uncertain
spark.

And when the round October sun, surprising
The laggard stars with his more glorious beams,
Kept on the splendours of his red uprising
Till day, half-spent, lay down to silent dreams
Of yellow woods and brimmed autumnal streams,
And woke again at even to the sound
Of harvest's ending song, and groaning teams

Dragging the wains with rich ripe sheaves en-
crowned,
And merry boys and maids that danced and
laughed around,—

Then I could laugh and sing, I well remember,
As one of them. Or when the moonlight flowing
O'er the white countenance of dead December
Lit the blank face and rigid eyelid, showing
The few faint flowers whose sad sepulchral glow-
ing
Shed a thin radiance round the snowy brow,—
My blood would tarry in its warm outgoing,
And falling back with silent lapse and slow,
Drown my still heart within in a deep flood of woe.

But it is past, the sweet and soft surrender
Of soul and body to this world's delight ;
No more I warm me in the sunny splendour,
No more refresh me in the dews of night ;
It is as though a sudden scaly blight
Had come on every flower, and plant, and tree ;
As on that noon which filled with ashes white
The green Pompeian gardens, when the sea
Fled, and the Italian mount reeled in its agony

VII.

That is thy star, fair girl!—I love it best
Of all the hosts that in the spangled sky
Walk to and fro, or in a stately rest
Keep their unchanging thrones eternally.
Look! 'twill not shun thee, for its lustrous eye
May not be veiled beneath a drooping lid,
Like thine, fair girl! when maiden fancies shy
Call up the wakeful blood, as once they did
When I, fond fool! out-blabb'd what I had best
have hid.

Yet not for this I love it best, I ween!
No! if 'twere dull and dark, not bright and clear,
And as a very Angel's eye serene,
In darkness and in dulness 'twere as dear;
For it hath stronger ties to me than seer
Versed in the starry laws hath ever read,
For mortal birth-linked to its wayward sphere,
I am no striver with a fate I dread,—
I locked a chain myself, and by that chain am led.

Bethink thee of that fair and sunny eve
When we sate prating of all careless things,
Thou carelessly, but I to joy or grieve
In deeming I espied the secret springs
Whence such and such words flowed—as monish-
ings

Or maidenly encouragement designed ;
Nay, thou forget'st, but I—the memory clings
To my fond heart, as to the longing mind
Of banished men, the last green peak they left
behind.

One crowned star sate all alone on high :
Like one that thinketh, sate she still upon
The dark, dark Heavens, and all the arching sky
Was silent for her thought who sate alone :
No murmur and no shout, no unison
Of loud and gentle vex'd her solitude,
But earth obedient watch'd her steady throne,
And though she spake no word, her silent mood
All restless things below to her own rest subdued.

Glorious it was to peer into her face !
So beaming and benignant was its look,
One could almost have deem'd that gentle grace
From some reflected earthly gaze it took !
Dewy and sad, as shining in a brook
Or stilly pool, when summer mists are grey ;
At first it smiled upon us, then it shook
And trembled, with strong passion ye would say,
Then shot forth one wild gleam, then utterly died
away !

O then how blank was all that gleaming sky,
Emptied of all its glory—by her flight
Made dead, as some fair body when the eye

Hides in death's shadows its enlivening light.
Then did we feel how dread a thing is Night ;
And not the deep coerulean abysses,
Baring their unfathomable gulfs to sight
Could win us not to mingle with our blisses
Some few regretful tears and cold misgiving kisses.

Then faltered some few stars into the blue :
The evening-star far off hung low and bright
And purple as a drop of morning dew.
And then the sparkles of eternal light
Swam over all, flushing the drear (6) blank height.
With beauty as of blossoms on a bough,
Yet ever longed I for another sight
Of that so wondrous shiner which but now
Was flung so scornfully off from Heaven's yet rosy
brow.

Then kneeled I down, and with a burning prayer
(I know not if to thee or Heaven I prayed)
Asked, that as long as on the summer air
That golden castaway should rise and fade,
I might remember that sweet evening shade
And thy most lovely face, although in tears
And beauty perishing as the stars arrayed ;
So, rising on me with the rising spheres,
That night should still shine bright down all the
depth of years.

Such boon in lover's confidence I sought

Unwitting of the portent :—but a languor
Paled suddenly the fainting stars, methought ;
And then the choleric wind in sudden anger
Veiled up their light ; and lo ! a brazen clangour,
As of the innumerable orbs wheeling away,
Rang from behind the darkness ;—such an anger
Plagued Heaven and all the hosts that I should pray
A boon of bliss so far beyond what mortal may.

Such sudden shudder ran all nature through ;
Yet was it granted, though with pain like this,
And striving such as shook the hanging dew
From night's black cope before its time, I wis.
Yet for the poison mingled with the bliss
'Twas granted, not for blessing :—so that I
Might ever with it think how happiness
Off from the face of my young life did die,
Even as that star fell off from that resplendent sky.

For then full shortly that I deemed thy love,—
As 'twere a plant at the full and prime of blowing
On all the under-branches of the grove,
One day, a warm and gentle light bestowing,
The next, a lank and flowerless pillar showing,—
Shed its scarce budded leaves, bent down, and
died ;—

And I grim gloom exchanging for the glowing
Of thy soft radiance, meaning due supplied
To the Portentous Star of that sweet Eventide.

VIII.

The hills stand dark against the setting sun,
Whose flag yet floats upon the western sky ;
Amidst the cloudy glory, one by one,
The glancing stars speed upward steadily ;
And the young glimmering crescent white and
shy
Walks like a spirit in the fading blaze,
Waxing in brightness as the glories die ;
And earth more closely wraps her veiling haze
And stealthy eve coming on, now hurries, now delays.

In the deep wood I stand as in old days :
The billows of green boughs wave round me still,
Above me and around me ; and the rays
Of the set sun grow chiller and more chill,
As they were wont of old. Yon ruddy hill
Wears yet its crown of gloomy elms as then ;
Yet in my ears runs sweetly the small rill
Till it grows silent in the peopled glen,
Shrinking within its moss from the stern eyes of men.

All is as it was wont to be ;—the flowers
As gay, the scents as rarely sweet as erst ;—
The weary eglantine flings down its showers
Of snowy blossoms gaily to the first
Sweet shiver of the nightwind ; and a burst
Of rapturous voices marks the earliest shade ;

And soft green lights gleam thickly interspersed
Among the mossy banks ; and overhead
Heaven in its living lamps shines lovelily arrayed.

O ! the enjoyment that may not be spoken,
Of which the round moon standing in the blue
Hath stirred the seal, now—never, to be broken ;
O the upheaving of the heart to view
More nearly her whose eye so pierces through
Our dull earth-crust, that mortal heart upheaps
To the proud glance as it were made anew,
To a new word untasted. O dull sleep's
Best break ! O loftiest spring from the eternal deeps !

And yet the blindness of my foolish thought !
That I should speak ev'n for a space as though
No more I knew than ancient Sages taught
To the eye-worshippers—with all I know !
Yet Heaven above me, and the earth below,
And the magnificence between, shall plead
My pardon well with Him who made them so.
O, for my eye's, and not my heart's, misheed,
In yon unangered sphere my pardon let me read !

Blessings beon thee, Crescent Moon ! in number
As the still stars about thee ! 'Twere a dream
In sooth to glorify a poet's slumber,
To think that such indeed they were ;—to deem
Each sparkle of that deep ethereal stream,
Which floats about thee, were a visible sign

Of blessings won from earth, each tremulous gleam
Shot from each star, a consciousness divine
Of thanks from human hearts which love their
light, like mine.

Fair Host !—sweet Stars ! in social conclave
sitting,
Or singly o'er your azure waste apart
With flickering wing and throbbing glory flitting,
Take ye, too, blessings from a grateful heart ;
And if from their low nest the tear-drops start,—
Shy birds of night,—'tis but a curious pain
To watch the course of Time's deceitful art ;
To think of bygone eves, a shadowy train ;
All that comes back so oft yet never comes again !

IX.

O Moon, among the scrolled clouds on high,
Wrapping thine unripe form and maiden smile,
I thank thee much, that with another eye
Thou lookest on me than thou didst erewhile ;—
Be but thy present gaze as free from guile
As that thy past one was from joy, and well
I may repose me on this little isle,
This small still isle amid the surge's swell,
Albeit in peace for long I may not hope to dwell.

And thou too, Light o' my memory ! thou, sweet
Moon,

That in the darksome waste of my lorn breast
Smilest, I thank thee ;—though thy dearest boon
Be Quiet, which is not, but apeth Rest.
My heart's high Queen ! my Spirit's Royal guest !
Before whose presence other tongues are mute,
By whose loud calls my soul is else opprest ;—
Mock-love that trims a faint and jarring lute,
Ambition pleading still an unrejected suit.

Thee would I call—too daringly ;—but years
Have left their crust upon me, and I bend
No more as erst to all the tyrant fears
Which once oppressed me at thy name, sweet
friend !

Thus boldly to thy feet my vows I send—
Hear me,—though blushes climb into thy cheek,
Imperial blushes such as did ascend
To Juno's brow when a mortal dared to seek
A Godhead's portion—yet, ev'n angered, hear me
speak !

To thee be this as all mine other toils,
In thee beginning, ending still in thee,—
Thee, the cold Goddess, at whose shrine the
spoils

I lay, in tribute for the victory.
Trifling the contest and the prize may be,
And yet not wholly valueless, I deem,
(Though not to thee, sweet scorner,) yet to me,

If but within thy heart one pleasant dream
It wake, or on thy cheek one peaceful sunny gleam.

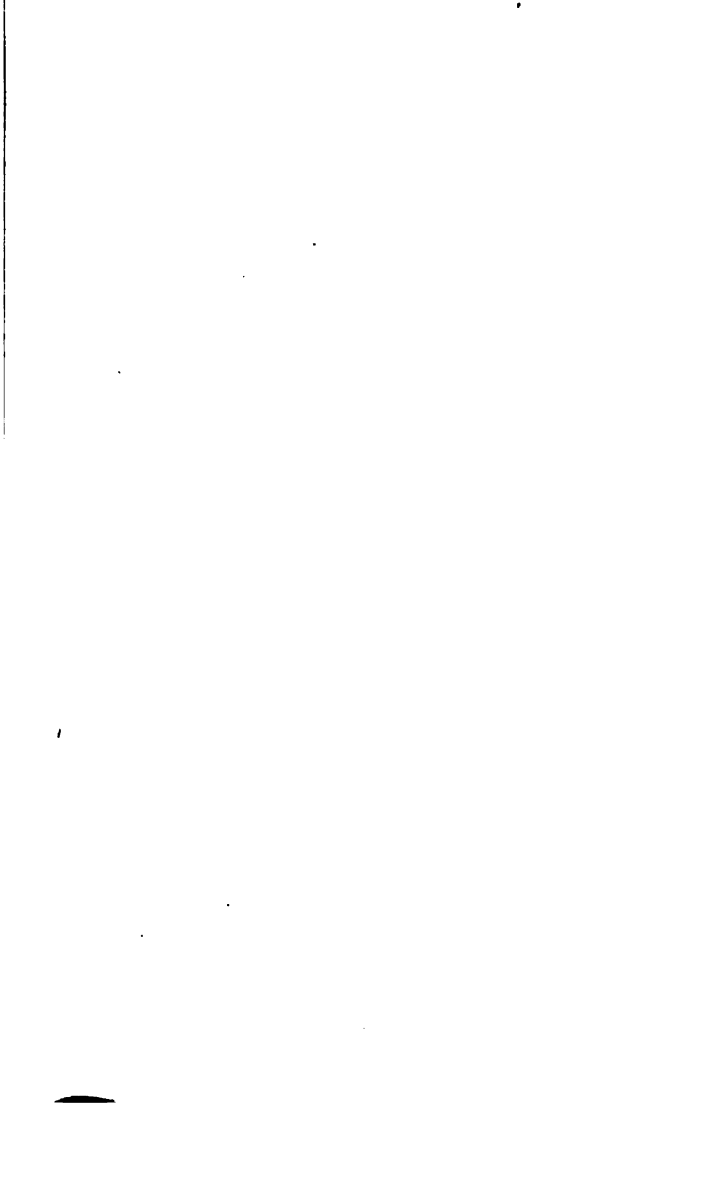
Have I not brought to thee in olden time
Full many offerings, worthless though they be,—
Weak flowers though budded in a golden clime,
Frail pearls tho' gathered from a deathless sea ?
They were my first—I gave them all to thee.
I may roam farther in that golden land,
I may dive deeper in that deathless sea,
Yet thine the undying fruit, and for thy hand
Whatever wealth I dig from that immortal sand.

Thou art a thread within my woof of life,
All golden, running down its storied face ;
Now hidden for a scene of shame and strife,
Then freshly glittering in a summer place :
Nor all unblest my life while I can trace
That sheeny line, > trouble lending light,
To pleasure, grandeur, and to calmness, grace.
Oh, be it ever present to my sight
As at my dawn of day, at noon, and eve, and night !

Oh stay, O stay !—dwell with me, joyous Pre-
 sence,
Sweet Shade, dwell with me !—sit thou by my side
In darkest sorrow and in lightest pleasance,
To share or shield ;—to heighten or to hide !
Soft praises ever to thine ears shall glide ;
As though I fear'd the spectral shape should fade

If my voice ceased the binding spell that tied
The bright sky's tenant to our earthly shade,
So constant, deep, and strong shall my fond prayer
be made.

So hear me, Thou, Mine Own, and yet *not* mine !
As thou wert she to whom my spirit's might
Gives its first morning incense, thou shalt shine
The last faint star upon mine age's night !
And not a single wavelet of delight
Shall roll its feeble tribute unto me,
But shall bring too thine image to my sight ;
Welcome for pleasure and for rarity,
Yet, oh ! commended most by that sweet Shape of
thee !



THE MADMAN'S DAY.

**" Aye, if the madman could have leave
" To pass a healthful day.'**

KEATS.



THE MADMAN'S DAY.

WITHOUT my clothes I went my way;
From out my father's doors I went,
A savage soul and discontent,
I could not bear to stay.
My heart with burning fears was hot;
She prayed me, but I heeded not;
A smothering heat was in my brain,
A glancing fire in every vein,
How could I bear to stay ?

I rushed into the open air ;
I left the silvery tones beseeching,
A meeter music I found there—
The night-owl fiercely screeching :
A boyish hand was in her nest,—
How could the kindly creature rest ;
Her home was downy-walled and white,
Her children were her sole delight ;
He fell for fear, the boyish thief,
His limbs were safe ;—the old yew-tree
Is scarcely eight feet high ;
He rose up and fled hastily :

For the horrible sound of the mother's grief
He fled, and so did I.

We left the dark churchyard behind ;
The glimmering gravestones and the yew :
We raced between the hedges, twined
All over with the white corn-bind,
And hops bestarred with dew.
His feet were clothed, but mine were bare ;
I sprang along as light as air,
I overtook the urchin soon :
I made the boy turn up his face,
That I his features well might trace
By the shining of the moon.
My God ! what loveliness was there,
That childish face so wildly fair !
So soft a cheek—so arch an eye—
Half innocence—half knavery.
I thought on Mary, and I said,
' God curse the beauty that is made
But to betray or be betrayed !'
So to myself I said.
The little one seemed half afraid
Of the naked man who held his arm,
And muttered so betwixt his teeth,
And breathed with such a whistling breath ;—
He thought I spoke some awful charm,
I knew it, yet I held him there,
And laid his palm on my hot breast,
(My heart the while lay still beneath)

And thus I made the urchin swear,
Never again such sin to dare
As rob a poor bird's nest,
He swore it in a sweet low tone,
Half-laughing, wicked little fairy !
O, how I wish'd the child my own—
And who the mother, Mary ?
I kissed his cheek, he feared not now,
His downy cheek, and then his brow ;
Then loosed my grasp and let him go.
He ran away until the turn,
And then his footsteps fell more slow ;
As one in thought he seemed to go.
Meanwhile the fire that had run low
Began again to burn.

It burned within my brain : O Hell !
What it was like I cannot tell ;
I never felt its like I ween ;
A sparkless, flameless, noiseless heat,
Yet measured by a leaden beat
A minute full between.
I was as one by fiends possest ;
My hair ran down with icy sweat,
Drip, drip upon my burning breast ;
So cold, it seemed to pierce the skin,—
O Jesu Christ, my sin, my sin !
O would I could forget !
How silent and how strong !—to hear
A crackling flame climb up one's limbs,

Feeding its way as up it climbs,
I think were welcomer
Than this strong, smothering, silent heat,
But measured by that fearful beat !

Away I ran, no matter where,
The cold wind bristled in my hair ;
My members drank the chilly wind,
My heart in its desire,
Which had been like a bird confined
Within a cage of fire,
Slacked its stretched wings, and sate at ease,
Hearing the noise of that sweet breeze.
I thought of home, a peaceful place,
Of childhood, and my mother's face ;
Of all the love that was in store
For me despite my guilty case,
And them that loved me almost more,
Because I wanted grace ;
I thought of nights which had come down
While we among the shrubbery stood,
And pure love set his icy crown
Upon my youthful blood ;
I thought of noon among the fields
So quiet when I lay alone ;
Of sunsets when, like crimson shields,
The China roses shone
Upon the eaves, upon the wall,
And ivy dark betwixt them all.
All peaceful things rose up again ;

The dew of them refreshed my brain ;
I nearly turned my penitent steps
To home, and to my mother's joy,
I saw the quick smile curl her lips
To meet her darling boy ;
Her darling, in his sin and shame,
Her son, her darling son the same.

Then while with love my heart was soft,
And blissful sighs broke quick and oft,
And tears, like dew at summer eves,
Gathering among the underleaves
Of waving plants, began to freight
My eyelids with a balmy weight ;
Then, suddenly, O Heaven and earth !
A shrieking hornblast issued forth—
As one might be at sunrise where,
By echoing Heaven surrounded,
The Prince of all the Powers of Air
His dread reveillez sounded,
And cracked his whips, to make appear
The lurking demons everywhere.

Then burned my heart again :—afresh
The horrid shiver shook my flesh.
On, on I went !—I did not run,
My pain, I felt, I might not shun ;
In quiet I bore on my load
Through woods where every singing bird
Awoke when my hot palm it heard

Crushing the deep grass, strowed,
As 'twere an ancient banquet room,
With rushes with their dry perfume ;—
Across bleak moors I went remote—
The peawEEP cried a wailful note ;
A babe that hath not tasted milk,
A babe whose mother dear is dead,
Whose cheek is soft as flaggy silk,
From out its weak and thirsty throat
So sad a voice would shed !
I went through pastures moist and deep,
The oxen bellowed in their sleep,
A short and wild and angry low !
That I with my foul foot should go
Through meadows innocent and pure,
What sinless creature might endure ?
Then would I stand quite still, and hear
The drops fall singly from the trees ;
And think how soon, like one of these,
My soul (for I was full of fear)
Would drop, a solitary falling
From life—a shivered dewdrop here,
More easy of recalling !

And then—but as I mused, alas !
That fearful pulse within my breast
Beat once again,—like lead on glass,
The dull deep clang ! away ! away !
No rest ! no stay !—away, away !
Away, away ! No rest !

A sense of guilt, like some foul wind,
Whose breath is suffocation,
Kept panting ever just behind :
Hope leaned on desperation.
Good God ! that race I cannot tell ;
Only I know, a vault-like sound,
An iron echo from the ground,
Rang ever, where my footsteps fell ;
Only I know, that I passed through
A village which, a child, I knew
As well as my own garden ;
White walls, green trees, a straggling stream,
And Labour, cheerful warden,
Tame birds, and stonecrop on the roof,
And lilac mallows making proof
Of every summer beam :
Now, in my race, I passed through it—
With dark red gloomy fire 'twas lit,
Such horrid flame as dyed the walls
Of Sodom and Gomorrah,
With gay sunshiny intervals,
Like mirth i' the midst of sorrow ;
A glimmering place ! a chattering rout
Of spinning-jennies all about
Kept up a doleful thrill :
It ran from brook to brook throughout !
It ran from hill to hill !
Away I sped with sobbing breath,—
One ghastly face tied up for death
Grinned at a cottage door :

I ran as if for life and death—
Thank God, I know no more !

And now to thee, my Mary dear,
My pearl of price ! my flower of pride !
I tell this tale, in quiet here
Sitting at thy sweet side !
In peace again—Heaven's light restored
To yonder balmy fields,
Each bud enfranchised to afford
Once more the scent it yields :
O blessed Mary ! who was this
That brought the beauty back ?
Who won a world of love and bliss
From yonder fearful wrack ?
'Twas thou, my love !—Be thine the meed
With Him who stirred thee to the deed !

SHORTER POEMS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

I.

•
He's not among them on the green ;
Those daisies may be gay and bright,
Those boyish bosoms clear and light ;
But he lies hid in shades unseen,
My love and my delight !

Is yonder he ? 'Tis like in size,
In limb as light, in step as free ;
Ah no ! I *feel* it cannot be,
My heart would leap through these dim eyes
If it *believed* 'twere he !

Said I 'twas like him ? O false eye !
O tongue too loose ! there is not there
One face, one form that may compare
With his ; of all that company
Not *one*, not *one* so fair !

Not even he, now loved the best,
Whose eyes are full of love, as day
Is full of light, may bear away
The palm from him who lies at rest,
And if not he, who may ?

All nobleness was on his face
And form : a soul so bright and bold
His perfect figure did o'ermould ;
Upon his brow a spirit's grace
Did seem to be unrolled.

Above the baseness of the earth
His mounted spirit, like a bird,
Sped on ; a height till then unstirred
He dwelt in, whence his song-like mirth
Fell round us, gladly heard.

Fine moods were with him ! Scorn of wrong
And Love attended on his steps ;
Like music, which in a moment skips
From low to high, they changed along
His fair and flushing lips.

No more—'tis not that all is said,
Oh no ! and angels in the sky
Would weary of God's praise ere I
Of his ; but he is cold and dead,
And we will pass it by.

II. FOR A BOOK OF POETRY, DESIGNS, ETC.

LITTLE Book, thou art intended
For all whimsies of the pen ;
Follies to be left or mended,
Some time future, heaven knows when ;
Haply not until the brain
Leave its coil of joy and pain ;
And the hearing, sight, and scent
Be waxen disobedient.

On thy pages shall be shrined
Every mood of changeful mind :
Joy and Sorrow, brother-powers ;
Hope that springs and Fear that cowers ;
Friendship, knitting subtle cords
Out of looks and thoughts and words ;
Charity, that, like a sun,
Kindles all it beams upon
Into blissful light serene ;
Love with taper fingers clean
Wreathing roses white and holy ;
Backward-leaning Melancholy ;
Peace, and peaceful discontent,
When the silence doth invent

Music, and the blank with forms
Self-impregnate, slowly warms
Into life ; as stagnant lakes
Curdle into worms and snakes.

Nor the pencil shall refuse
Toll of lovely sights and views,
Caught through jambs of granite cleaves
In the set of autumn eves ;
Nor sweet forms in vision seen,
Or with running waves between
Spied far down in stilly waters,
Ocean's shadowy sons and daughters ;
Nor the shapes, that walk away,
Twinkling 'twixt the trees far off,
When the night is met with day,
And the marsh-frogs croak and cough,
And the night-bird's balmy throat
Lingers on its favourite note.

Nor the forms that come and go,
Light and laughing, sad and slow,
Dimly seen to frown and dimple
Down the aisles of History's temple ;
Grecian lords with hanging hair ;
Roman ladies sternly fair ;
Knight with steed, and dame with tercel ;
And children's faces universal
Linking our age with that and all
By nature's likeness general.

Little Book, thy slaves shall be
Eye and heart and memory ;
Fancy shall be at thy door,
Truth thy bounden servitor ;
Every whim the eye that catches,
Coinage of the midnight watches,
Or of day, though less divine,
Little Volume, shall be thine ;
Vision—filmy train of dreams ;
All that is and all that seems ;
Things of spirit, things of blood,
Outlined in abstruser mood,
When the fingers loosely play,
And the mind is far away ;
Things of sorrow, things of glee,
Honoured Volume all for thee !

III. A MORAL FOR SPRING.

WHEN the Spring sky is waxing soft,
And sun and cloud and sunny rain
Change o'er its surface fast and oft,
Then seek a low and sheltered lane :
There let then be a dancing brook
And a green plank or mossy ledge,
Where you may rest at ease and look
Upon the flapping of the sedge ;
And let some nodding briars hang o'er
To whip the waters till they seethe ;
Partly by these disturbed, but more
By rugged pebbles underneath :
Then think of life, how often vexed
With fretting sedge and scourging briars,
Yet ever how much more perplexed
By its own bed of fierce desires !

IV. THE GREEN LANE.

A DAY of joy ! a gladsome day,
Fit courier of the flowers of May !
Come out, along the grassy lane
That links green Bilton's glancing spire
To Lawford's road, for sand and mire
The road of roads again !
Come out ; there is the tall Oak-tree
Upon its bank of grass,
And sitting there we'll think we see
The soft spring-breezes pass,
The blithe spring-breeze that scarce can stir
For this warm air entangling her.

Say you the oaken buds are pale ?
No matter ! we'll look down the vale ;
And Lawford trees, a dusky group,
We'll fancy green ; and Brownsover's
Grey hedge-row lines and Holbrook's firs ;
With woodbine withes we'll loop ;
And we—yet more could Fancy do—
We'll make a Spring, friend, for us Two.

Us two alone ? Nay, we'll not wrong
With self's least blight this joyous day ;

Though we alone are here, we'll long
For other faces far away ;
Dear friends from Granta's willowy side,
And silent Soar and crystal Clyde,
And others still as true and dear,
Who are at hand but are not here.

The seasons might be secret scrolls
Hid underground, for us,
Dear friend, if we with our hid souls
Could always commune thus :
But peace, dear boy, that lies to you,
A virgin ore upon the soil,
To older hearts sinks out of view ;
A secret mine, but worked by few,
And then with pain and toil ;
So tell us wiser men than we,
And so I know that it may be ;
Then speed, kind Fancy, and uncoil
Thy Spring for him and me.

Our good green lane with wreaths is drest,
Our old oak looks his stateliest ;
The gorse is lit upon the hedge,
A sullen fire, like smouldering sedge,
A sullen, smouldering fire ; .
And hawthorn shoots are snowy white ;
And tender buds just bared to sight
Spot thick the dancing briar ;
And far and near the speedwell shines,

And hops as fair as Tuscan vines
As gracefully and fondly fair,
Shoot snaky tendrils everywhere.

Come down, spring birds ! come, lark and thrush,
The corn is thickening, and the bush
Will well protect from prying eye
The dear domestic mystery.
Come, swallow ! lo ! the gentle brook
Looks up with an impatient look,
It would be kissed by breast of thine,
And it would share its sunny shine
With wagtails through a crystal rain
Self-raised, now seen, now lost again.

Now, fancy, rest ; say, gentle friend,
Where shall her tricky voyage end ?
See, Newbold's Church stands almost near,
Drawn by the moistened atmosphere ;
A quiet church, it stands among
Its tribes of green or mossy graves ;
And listens to the merry throng
Of Avon's rippling waves ;
And not by these to sadness won,
By those to over-gladness bent,
Stands holy in its unison
Of earth's delight and heaven's content.
Thither, my friend, let fancy go,
And rest her wings in that low fane,

And then we two shall feel and know
That she may speed again,
For in no feverish discontent
Our pleasures in her train we sent,
If thus among those graves she go,
And rest her in that holy ground,
Unshocked the holiness below,
And the holiness around.

V.

THINE eyes are calm and cold, my love,
A gentle glorious hue
Made up of sunset's gold, my love,
And starry midnight's blue,
A ghostlike glory—half of day,
And half of splendours past away.

Nay, look not so serene, my love,
A twinkle let there be,
A twinkling smile between, my love,
Thy stony glance and me ;
That placid look I cannot bear—
O, let one smile be dancing there !

No smile !—no word !—no breath, my love !
Ah well ! I can devise
An answer even from death, my love !
A smile from stony eyes ;
I'll shut mine own, then I shall see
My Love as wonted smile on me.

VI.

My sorrow is not sin ;—by day
My eyeballs are like balls of stone :
But when at night I kneel to pray,
And Heaven and I are all alone,
Then God's own Hand so strong and still
Unlocks them, and I weep at will.

O my first Friend ! in childhood's joy
Was fastened first our love's sweet chain ;
'Twas riveted upon the boy,
And now in youth 'tis snapt in twain ;
And just when I am grown a man
And need have all the love I can !

Yet wounds it most that none should know,
Save me and two or three beside,
That earth such loss doth undergo :
To me it seems now thou hast died
That virtue is gone out of nature ;
Yet other men see no defeature :

The Heaven's blue dome is blue as ever,
The grass as green, the birds as gay,

The wind as busy with the river,
The sun as constant to the day,
And thou, that perfect chrysolite,
Art hid ;—we could not bear the sight !

It is so strange that thou, so fair,
So noble, shouldst be let to die,
And still the freedom of the air
Be granted to such things as I ;
It is a marvel most extreme,
’Tis like the puzzle of a dream.

Couldst thou not tarry, O my friend !
My schoolfellow ! my mate in play !
Thought’st thou my love was at an end
When we no more met every day,
And didst thou run to treacherous Death
To cure the pains of broken faith ?

Couldst thou not wait till love had died,
Or sickness torn thy bloom away ;
And I, attending at thy side,
Had used mine eyes to thy decay,
And practised my sad heart awhile
To live upon a fainter smile ?

Or tell me truly, was my love
A load too burdensome to bear ?
Ah, fond ! now thou art fled above
My love hath followed thee up there ;

And there it is, and angels' mirth
Rings down through it unto the earth.

But angels' joy is grief and pain
To men whose hearts are vile and weak,
And I would pray that thou again
On earth shouldst walk and smile and speak ;
But that He wills who knoweth best,
And I am fond and fear-oppressed.

Yet this I would,—that I might be
Where thou art, O my first and best !
For here my soul most lonelily
Abideth, and is not at rest ;
I loved life well before, but now
I only wish to be as thou !

O come thou back, my schoolboy love,
Or let me come and be with thee ;
My soul is restless as a dove
Let out upon the silent sea,
Or that which from the ark went forth
While yet the waters hid the earth.

O, my dear friend ! if I had known
Thy danger ; and thy danger's cure
Had been my life-breath for thine own,
I would have paid the price, be sure ;
But now, since that can never be,
Oh would, oh would I were with thee !

VII. DIRGE.

THY cheek is cold, thy cheek is blue,
Life hath never such a hue ;
Thou art dead, who cannot tell ?
Ah me ! fare thee well !

Ah ! thine eye so bright and proud !
All is covered with a cloud,
And thy careless heart so free ;
Ah me ! woe is me !

Thy lips so curling, rosy-red,
Stiff and blue and cold and dead !
Which sweet words once bubbled o'er,
Ah me ! Never more !

Thou hast left the earth so gay ;
Thou in Heaven sing'st to-day :
Thou'rt in Heaven, there to dwell ;
'Tis well ! fare thee well !

Thou art fled and leavest me,
Cruel, cruel 'tis of thee ;
Thou art worthy of much blame,
Ah ! love ! fie for shame !

Like a curly-tendriled vine
Thou about my heart didst twine ;
As a child I loved thee so,
Ah me ! none could know.

Yet thou fleest—'tis no more
All I knew and loved before ;
All is buried underground ;
Ah, love ! love, sleep sound !

Nay, a better lore I learn,
Yet methinks thou shalt return ;
When Christ cometh thou wilt come,
Welcome, day of doom !

VIII. HOLBROOK FIRS.

No matter for the rain !—'tis not
A thing to care for : lo ! with ease
I could make count of every spot
That trickles through these latticed trees.
These burly pines are not afraid,
But gladly take the kindly aid,
That they the sooner may lay by
Their black old-fashioned green, and vie
With the fresh year's hilarity.
No matter for the rain ! unless
We make it cause of thankfulness
For cuckoo's throat, that wins therefrom
New doublets of a mellower sound,
For gladness rising all around,
And intimations glad that come
From overhead and underground :
The wild wood-dove, that doth imbibe
A kind of madness of delight,
And frantically flings away
Her voice o'er hill, and down, and plain,
And cares not if it come again,
Since she, she only or the tribe

Of feathered things as blithe and bright,
The lack full gladly will repay,
The lack to heaven and this green spring,
And echo faintly answering.

Peace—peace and joy,—these gentle Trees
Should only hold such guests as these :
Dear friend, no matter for the rain !
Those larches are in glee as loud
As they had never seen a cloud :
Look round you—look again !
See yonder train of primrose buds
Set out,—it rises and descends,
Till deep in Brinklow's willowy woods
The blithe procession ends :
Now look each floweret in the face,
Each floweret like a fair pale sun ;
A peaceful eye, dear friend, could trace
Joy brightening, softening every one !

I am alone, my friend, and yet
I speak as if we were together ;
And so we are, and I forget
All things but you : and well I know,
Taught by a blind sweet inner sense,
Which overcomes fond why and whence,
That thy dear love, which lifts me so
Above this plague of wayward weather,
Hath yet a stronger power, a flow
More deep, a holier influence.

I know—have known for years—that Earth
Was bound to me by ties unholy,
So falsely have I played with mirth
When my best mood was melancholy :
But now 'tis changed ! thank God, 'tis changed !
And things half-loved and things estranged,
Things high, and pure, and holy,
Come back in thee so pure and good,
And I a humbler happier mood
Inhabit, and am lowly ;
And so the winds of earth's unrest
Pass harmless round my quiet nest ;
And through green boughs of fresh delight
My heart, undazzled by the view,
Sits gladly watching day and night
Heaven's starred or sunny blue.
And, dearest friend, to thee I owe
That I again so glad may be,
To thee and God who made thee so,
And gave thee unto me.

IX. ADDRESS TO BEAUTY.

Ort have I sought thee, Beauty, oft,
And found thee oftener yet,
Around, below, aloft,
A seal and signet set :
A seal on this sweet earth,—a token ;
A glimmer from a hidden mine
Cast to the negligent sunshine ;
A promise, that may not be broken,
Of bliss that hides where mortal eye
Cannot pierce through the fair obscurity.

Sweet soul of this sweet earth !
One other comes to thee ;
From men and men's bounds gladly forth
Thine own to be !
Yet gladly ? Ask no word ;
The heart may be about to die,
And yet win glimpses of its old delight ;
Even as the warmth was stirred
In David's bosom when the Shunamite
Came there to lie.

O send me not away,
Blest spirit, that I sought thee not before ;

I had a dearer play,
My heart with other mantling joys ran a'er,
And was contented with the golden store
Of those rich smiles now mine no more ! no
more ! no more !

Content ? The very sunlight from the sky
I could have parted with, for I
Had a light—her eyes, her eyes—
Dearer than a thousand skies.

Now these are turned aside
To others than to me ;
And I repent me of my olden pride,
And bend to thee !

Gracious soul of this sweet earth !
Come from the azure deeps, come forth !
Come from the starry isles, if keeping
There thy glorious rest unsleeping ;
Or from hiding in the caves,
Coral-paven, walled with pearl ;
In whose depths the gamesome waves
Run and leap, and toss and whirl ;
Or from the islands in the ocean,
Steady 'midst eternal motion ;
Or the shores to weary billows
Laying green or golden pillows ;
Or where'er thou art abiding,
Proudly shewn or shyly hiding,
Come, when dawn is pale and grey,
Or when glory, bolder growing,

Nestles in the breast of day ;
Come, when eve is calmly flowing
Into every nook and field,
And the moon is unrevealed,
Or by glimpses glowing.

Hear thy child and come to me,
Come to me, sweet mother, come !
Life is lonely without thee,
Lonely, dark, and wearisome !

X.

IN vain the Heart calls out for words,
And asks coy Fancy for a strain
Worthy to be and to remain ;
She, wilful maiden, leaves the chords
To silence, and no aid affords :
But when the blind and baffled Will
In spite and feebleness lies still,
Out come the notes like autumn birds
That jostle in the air, and then
The Head and Heart are friends again.

Who knows a poet's pain and pleasure,
Who knows not this ? but we must measure
The weariness and the annoy,
My friend, beside the after joy.
The pathways of our human mind
Are narrow, and the step behind
Treads out the footsteps earlier printed ;
And if our pains be crowned at last,
Light Fancy looks not to the past,
And Labour is contented.

XI. TO IMPERIA.

THOU art not, and thou never canst be mine ;
The die of fate for me is thrown,
And thou art made
No more to me than some resplendent shade
Flung on the canvass by old art divine ;
Or vision of shaped stone ;
Or the far glory of some starry sign
Which hath a beauty unapproachable
To aught but sight,—a throne
High in the heavens and out of reach ;
Therefore with this low speech
I bid thee now a long and last farewell
Ere I depart, in busy crowds to dwell,
Yet be alone !

All pleasures of this pleasant Earth be thine !
Yea, let her Servants fondly press
Unto thy feet,
Bearing all sights most fair, all scents most sweet:
Spring, playing with her wreath of budded vine ;
Summer, with stately tress
Prinked with green wheat-ears and the white corn-
bine ;
And Autumn, crowned from the yellow forest-tree ;

—And Winter, in his dress,
Begemmed with icicles, from snow dead-white
Shooting their wondrous light ;
These be thine ever. But I ask of thee
One blessing only to beseech for me,—
Forgetfulness.

XII. INSCRIPTION FOR A SECLUDED SEAT.

THE daisy nods at twilight, and a sound
Rustles up softly from the dewy ground ;
And the inquisitive stars at summer eves
Sometimes behold me through the ruffling leaves.
If thou hast eyes as pure and voice as sweet,
Come ! thou art welcome to my mossy seat.

XIII. DAY'S HELP.

ALL night I slept a tortured sleep
Betwixt the demons, doubt and fear ;
They held my eyes, I could not weep,
Nor lift their fingers sere.

At length with morn I crept away ;
I walked between the arching limes ;
On came the day-break red and grey,
As in departed times.

The glad birds' noise went up around—
O God ! or my own foolishness !
I took it for an ominous sound
Of peace to my distress.

And day flung lavishly about
His broad white beams ; my terror fled ;
Surely I heard a secret shout
Of angels overhead !

Make not our hope to ebb and flow,
Great God, who art our strength and stay ;
But let the dark night help us so
As doth the sunny day !

XIV.

I WILL not paint my love's perfections
With lifeless hues from nature's store ;
His gentle words, his gentle actions
Shall speak his worth, my sorrow more.

I will but tell that in his bosom
(Fair chest !) a noble heart was hid ;
I will but say that honour's blossom
Shone fair and white on all he did.

Or if I tell his lofty stature,
His arching brows, his curling lips,
'Tis but to shew how his high nature
His outer beauty did eclipse.

It seemed to me his noble spirit
Was like some ancient Arch sublime :
Which, dwarfing all the dwellings near it,
Brings back the old gigantic time.

And there was Love, a lowly floweret,
Beneath this arch so fair and tall :
O why did death so soon devour it,
And make that lofty arch to fall !

XV.

BOLD Spring! disdain those puny flowers,
Dwarfed stepsons of the frost;
Cast off all thought of wintry hours,
Whatever price it cost :
Fling far away to darkest night
(Be just, sweet Spring, be fearless !)
Those primroses so blear and white,
These daisies dim and cheerless.
Yon haggard violets maimed and sere,
O cordial Spring, disdain them !
To wrong thy glory have no fear,
'Twould wrong it to retain them :
Disdain, disown the stunted birth,
And clear the shame from off the soil ;
To force, not love, be sure, the earth
Brought forth a brood so mean and vile !

Then fling thy hands abroad, sweet Spring,
On tree, and hedge, and field,
Call out the leaves, glad heralding
Of gladness unrevealed ;
The bud, the flower, the fruit,—the blade,
The barley in the sheaves ;
For all thy bliss destroyed, delayed,

O give us but green leaves !
The odours of the buds unseen,
O blessed Spring, enfranchise ;
And bid the clouds of golden green
Go wandering in the branches :
Let us be folded when we walk
With hedges thick and thickening trees ;
With verdure clothing every stalk,
And fragrance filling every breeze !

Then, Spring, once safe, thy triumph gained,
Be merry on the past ;
With scented winds at will unchained
Mock winter's icy blast ;
Besnow the garden walls with flower,
With lilac buds behail us ;
Rain apple-blossoms by the hour,
Our patience will not fail us ;
Nay, we will aid thy glee, not slack
With frolicsome petition,
To dreary winter to come back,
And better his condition ;
And if he come, we will not care,
But jeer the grey-beard to his face ;
Nor grudge that one day's sharper air
Should give the next a fresher grace.

XVI. THE MISER'S DREAM.

THERE are brown lashes to full many an eye,
And dark rich locks down pearly shoulders rolled,
And yet I care not ; sleeping peacefully,
And counting in my sleep the scantless gold,
Laid up in slumber's gorgeous treasure-hold.
It is no care to me that running tears
Dim the bright eye ; I cannot leave untold
My heaps, though brown locks in the sun of years
Grow white and dry, or fall in the blast of sudden
fears.

The light by which I count is glorious red,
The very heaps' own light that lie around,
Cast from the ruddy golden hillocks spread
Thickly as graves in a city burial-ground ;
But these are gold, rich gold ; no idle mound
Built over dead men's bones ; and golden showers
Rain ever on them with a chinking sound,
Sweeter than when the May-queen, gathering
flowers,
Shakes o'er the sleeping pool the dewy bellamours.

Ah ! let the lean-faced Poet with quick eyes
Tell if he will of plashing summer shower ;

I love the golden rain that did surprise
Languishing Danae in the iron tower :
This for the poet and his balmy bower !
His be the drops that sparkle on the tree,
I will give up the jewels in the flower,
And all the spoil of summer's argosy ;—
But oh ! these golden drops, these rich red drops
for me !

XVII. SONG.

If the Spring is sweet, when its violets
In a countless train assemble,
Yet thou art sweeter, (who forgets ?)
With thine eyes, and the veiny rivulets
That round thine eyelids tremble !

If Summer be dear with its dewy prize
Of the damask buds unclosing,
Yet thou art dearer, (who denies ?)
With thy cheeks and the rosy light that lies
On thy downy skin reposing !

If Autumn with golden sheaves be fair,
And the hops which the wind caresses,
Yet thou art fairer, I declare,
With the sunny shine of thy golden hair,
And the toss of thy dancing tresses !

And if Winter be white with its glittering snow,
In wave, and wreath, and wrinkle,
Yet thou art whiter, well I know,
With thy neck, and thy long neck's graceful flow,
And thy teeth's resplendent twinkle !

XVIII.

TO THREE LITTLE GIRLS AT A PIANOFORTE.

DARLING children !—three together,
Now with finger, now with palm !
Ah ! the notes—I doubt me, whether
They will understand the charm :
Listen how they cross and scream !
Wilder music not the stream
Wakes from all its stones in motion,
When its face is white as cream ;
Verily not the tossing ocean,
With its quarrelling waves gregarious,
Makes a melody more various !

Hush !—my children, let the riot
Cease awhile into a calm ;
Let the jangling notes be quiet !
Rest the finger, and the palm !

Sisters small, shall I be teaching
How this earth's fair tune is marred
By the eager over-reaching,
By the touch too quick, too hard ?
How this bodily instrument
Owns a kindred discontent,
Folly strained or passion jarred ?

Nay, sweet peaceful sisterhood,
'Twere no use, it is no need ;
Ye are yet too pure and good—
Vain to you the lore indeed ;

Come and kiss me, come and shew,
Love,—that only lore ye know :
I'd give years, and wealth, and wit,
To know half as much of it !

XIX. INSCRIPTION FOR A SPRING-HEAD.

THE leaves' pure shadow, and the cleanly shine
Of noontide's sun and midnight's stars is mine ;
No unclean impress yet my face hath curst,
Take care, O stranger, thine be not the first !

XX. SONG. (7)

I LOVE thy glowing cheek, but best
I love thy golden hair,
To hide my face in that sweet nest,
And woo a happy-visioned rest,
In that dark ambush there.

One ear against thy cheek's aglow,
The other, it is bare :
Fling, sweetest love, o'er it also,
I pray thee, love, in mercy throw
The meshes of thy hair.

Ah ! love, I thought to crop a rest
Of golden-pinioned dreams,
But slumber in so sweet a nest
With thee for mistress, me for guest,
A sacrilege it seems.

Thy hair it shuts us in all round ;
'Tis like a summer cave,
With vine-curles trailing to the ground,
That ever with a slumberous sound
Serenely shift and wave.

Each burning blush of sunset's sky
 Into our pleasant tent
(As through its lash the lovelit eye)
Shines with a richer, warmer dye,
 Through thy light tresses sent.

Never were we so much alone
 As now, my own heart's dove !
Come, turn thy face, mine own, mine own !
Come, let us talk—we are alone—
 Come, let us talk of love.

XXI. THE HIGHLANDER IN ITALY.

COME! pleasant thoughts of home!—be near, be
near!

In these hoar woods more dear,
Shelving ungently to the torrent's side,
Than when a year ago, among the trees,
That circle with their loving boughs the porch
Of our ancestral church,
My cheek as yet unyellowed by disease,
I called you to my heart at eventide!

There is a lake that wins the sunbeams here,
Even like our own blue mere,
And bluer far the sky that lies thereon,
And lovelier far the flowers that bend their necks
To break its ripple with their gentle kisses;
But oh! my sad eye misses
The blushing wreath of heather red, that decks
Our own lake, heaving in its ribs of stone!

And here are birds that sing unto themselves
Among the mountain shelves,
Or wake a louder music o'er the flood,
That rudely, like a tongue-tied infant, mocks
The tumult, or the sweet, soft, stealing song;

But I forget, and long
For the clear echoes from our naked rocks,
And the shrill eaglets quarrelling o'er their food.

And here are joyous voices now and then
Of glad wayfaring men,
Thrown up in sport, and kindly tones beseeching
The morning's blessing on the traveller ;
But though the sound be winning to the ear,
Yet 'tis not half so dear,
Nor half so strong the sleeping heart to stir
As those old accents of my mother's teaching.

Yes ! and here too is every other thing
Of my heart's worshipping,
When first my map of life I fondly planned ;
But all are changed, even as the lake, the wood,
The bird, the music of the human tongue,
Aye, over all is flung
Some change,—o'er all except my native blood,
Which is the same and fits not with the land.

It seems but mockery to mine eyes to see
Church, valley, lake, and tree,
Spread all around me, yet not calling forth
One gush of pleasure from this stony breast,
That did so melt, when from my own old room,
I gazed on mere and coomb,
And spire and ancient elm in sabbath rest,
Ere yet my foot had touched a foreign earth.

But then the yellow tinge came o'er my cheek,
And I set forth to seek,
In a more southern region's fabled wealth
Of lifeful breezes and restoring springs,
Some respite from my sharp and gnawing pains ;
But still the fever reigns,
And now I would return,—in the olden things
Of my own home, to find my *spirit's* health.

But 'tis too late!—and Earth may close her book
For me,—for I may look
No more upon the single page I love ;
And may-be it is well,—that clinging bands
Of old affections, and the ties as strong
Of scenes loved well and long,
May not with fatal strength knit down my hands
When I would stretch them to the heaven above !

XXII. MOTTO

FOR A BOOK OF SEA-WEEDS.

STOLEN from the ocean-depths ? It is not true ;
But gently, by the wave's commissioned hand,
Plucked from the dark sea-gardens where they
 grew,
And laid, as Ocean's offering to the land,
With heaps of speckled shells upon the glistening
 sand :
Thence gathered for delight of children's eyes,
And question thus awaked of Nature's mysteries.

XXIII. THE HAUNTED COTTAGE.

Now am I by the haunted cot,
Where once were murderous deeds adoining ;
'Tis whole, and sound, and ruined not,
Yet somehow sadder than a ruin.

And why, it is not hard to tell,
For nature's justice doth not sleep ;
And what is stained by deeds of hell,
Green earth is loth to keep.

And so all rusts she sends, and mould
Into the joints, and roof, and wall ;
And fear on all men who behold,
With wishes for its fall.

And see ! the dust upon the ground
Claims kindred with its dusty thatch ;
The damp's small finger-mark is found
Upon the blistered latch.

There is a little pool close by ;
Upon its bank the furze-bush quakes ;
A clear cold water ; like an eye,
Strange shades of sense it takes.

It seems to look towards that lone cot,
As if some fellowship it had
Therewith : 'tis not in good, I wot,
It looks so stern and sad.

And yet not sadness such as bows
Yon weary cottage walls forlorn ;
Though overcast, its guilty brows
Have yet a touch of scorn.

You might believe that ill it brooked
Those guilty walls' so slow decay,
And therefore thus it looked, and looked
So sternly night and day.

And thus, perchance, it vents the claim
Of natures, that immortal be,
Which, we may think, can hide their shame
In their eternity.

'Tis well ; for if upon earth's face
Its secret crimes could all be read,
For love or mirth, what fitting place ?
Where could we lay our dead ?

XXIV.

I HAVE a lady throned in my soul,
That in her home—my soul—hath dwelt alway,
And never seen the merry sunlight roll
O'er the glad peaks at morning, nor the May
Flush the bare thorns i' the spring-tide; sitting
at play
In my still soul among the roses there
Which never bud nor fade; beneath its day,
Which ebbeth not, nor springs, like the outer air
But bideth still and rich, as the roses fresh and fair.

And She herself it is that keepeth still
My heart, with joy or fear no more distressed
As once, but throbbing gently with a thrill
Awed to the quiet of that quiet guest;
And yet not dully bowed to her behest
But pulsing measurely, like a Fountain keeping
In an eastern hall its regular unrest;
And so all day and night my heart is leaping
Even as I wake or sleep, that Dame awake or
sleeping.

Soothly thou sayest 'tis no mortal Dame;
No light of earthly fire is in her eye,
She is immortal, being of heaven;—her name,

Ye would well guess, divinest Poesy ;—
And her true home is in the starry sky,
But she came down to me, most blessed Leech,
When sick with love my heart was near to die :
And a relieving lore she did me teach,
And soft as winnow of an angel's wings her speech.

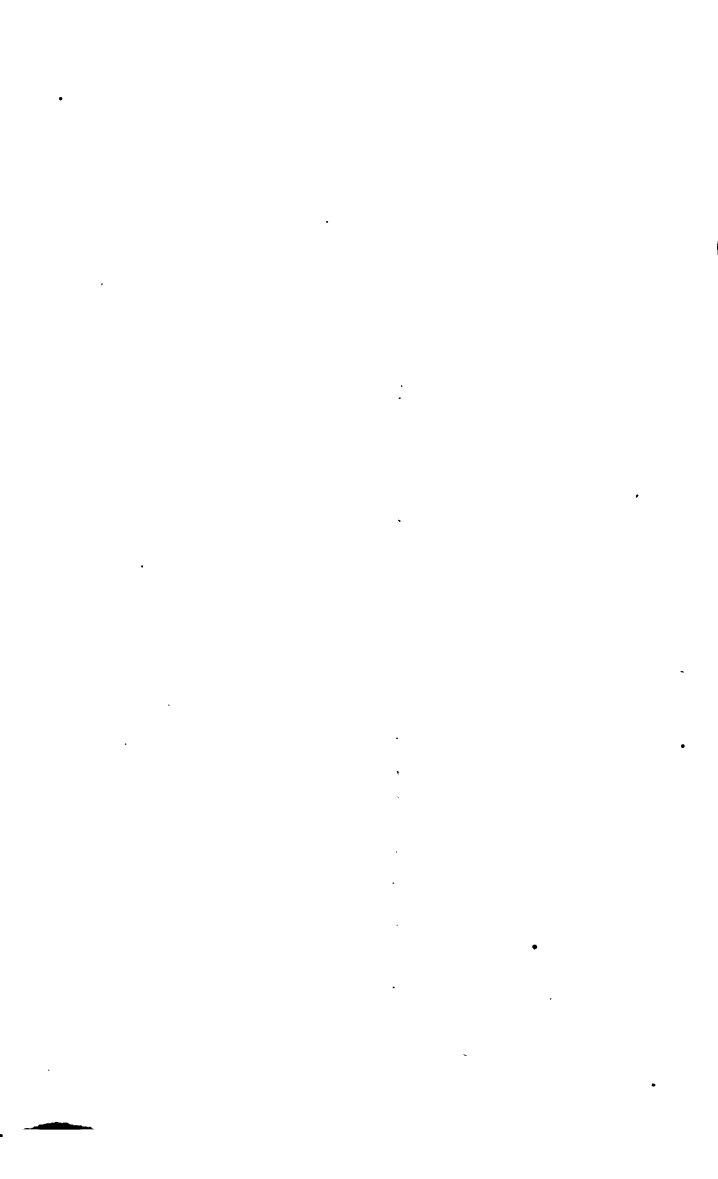
She gave me all in which my soul rejoices !
She poured a subtle essence in my ears,
So that I understood all Nature's voices ;
How the young birds choose out their mottled feres,
And how the stars roll ringing on their spheres,
Thrilling the air about them ; and the trees'
Low welcome when the dewy morn appears ;
And the faint loves of busy-seeming bees,
Whereto the idle flowers sing sleepy lullabies.

And from my eye by her too was withdrawn
The earthly crust which did confine its rays ;
So I beheld, if at the rosy dawn
A golden star would lag awhile to gaze,
In timorous wonder at the mighty maze
Which lay beneath her feet ; or all too early
At even (like a primrose that displays
His tender cheek when winter winds are surly)
Glimmer with faint dim light most winning, soft,
and pearly.

And other things I saw by that device ;
How young buds blindly to the surface creep,

Then to the sun spread wide their wondering eyes,
Like children of a sudden waked from sleep ;
And how upon the broad unwieldy deep
The million million interweaving waves
A measured dance and seemly order keep ;
And how the moon exchanges her dim caves ;
And how the flesh melts down in the hot and
trampled graves.

Yea, all things good and bad thereby I saw ;
Made rich beyond all riches, sound, or sight,
By that uplifting of the eternal law.
But, for to all she gives not such delight,
To tell those things to any mortal wight
She lets not ; stringing still more close than ever
The tongue which haply might abuse its right ;
And vainly strive I those strong bonds to sever,
Wasting short life away in fruitless fond endeavour.



SPRING SONNETS.



SPRING SONNETS.

I.

No hint of spring ! no single forming flower,
Tipt with kind blue or tender-blushing red
As touched by morning's finger, lifts its head
In cunning corners of the privet bower ;
No crocus shuts at evening's starry hour,
Jealous of heaven ; nor on the ground is spread
The constant periwinkle's hardihead
As wonted, lustrous from the wintry shower.
Whither is gone the sunny purple sky ?
Where hide the summer winds serene and shy ?
It is so long since nature's glory fled
That were't not for the birds that still abide
Their Mother—the long-slumberer—the dull-eyed,
Man might forget his faith, and deem her dead.

II.

THE overclouding Day is shy, may be,
Our too fastidious niceness to displease
With rays not bright enough, too free a breeze.
O Sun, come back ! no ill-wise critics we !
Morn after morn went lagging tediously
(Dimness for day, a deeper haze for night)
And never one slant ray of sunny light
Came flickering through the cloudy company !
O Sun, we now have learned (if needed this)
The thankfullest humbleness : we do not *try*
But *feel* ; our wisdom with a dismal train
Came to us ; she is here. O forth again,
Forth on thy wings of love, and hope, and bliss,
Bright Sun, into the blank deserted sky !

III.

THE trees are dripping : 'tis a pleasant sound,
Though but from leafless boughs; though there be
spread

No shadows of green branches overhead,
No windless screen of rustling leaves around :
Yet the grey carpet of the wintry ground
Is greening, and the pale buds spot the trees ;
And the dear fragrance floats upon the breeze
Of brooks set free, and prisoned leaves unbound.

The chapel cross upon a space of blue
Stands clear ; about it is a rainy mist :
The weather-watcher scents the south ; anon
The haloed Moon comes tremulously on ;
The clouds into a goldenish amethyst
Kindling. Sweet season, be the omens true !

IV.

THE earliest scent of dew this Year hath tasted,
And oh, how welcome ! Like a friendly face
Calling old times from their dim dwelling-place
It comes : five passive months my heart hath wasted
In bondage ; this fresh odour hath uncased it ;
And gaily from its chrysalid serenity
Leaps the glad spirit in the year's amenity :
Winter was stern, but life hath yet outfaced it,
And with a following of the laughing leaves,
And flowering buds ; and budding flowers, rejoices,
Freed from her thralldom ; but last eve I heard
The warning of her dear preluding bird ;
And lo ! already she is here ; and cleaves
All heaven and earth with quickened scents and
 voices !

V.

TIME and the constant Spring will conquer all :
Five cruel months of rain, and snow, and frost
Attacked the Spirit of life, who fought, but lost ;
Then underground, having dug a secret hall,
They laid therein their unresisting thrall,
Trode down the grave and left it. Then the fates
Drew back those tyrants through their golden gates ;
And nature did her favourite spring recall ;
But as she came not, mourning her as dead,
Took weeds and wreathed them round her desolate
head,
And would not hear of comfort ; but in grief,
Couched on dry river-flats, lay still and wept :
Nevertheless the lazy spring but slept,
And now is here again with flower and leaf.

VI.

DAYS back and weeks, with unregarding eyes
(As her best cheer) hath Earth beheld the morn
Slant downward from its eastern lodge forlorn,
A wintry sheet of white cold light. Arise,
Sun of young May ! behold the softening skies
Present a flushing cheek (their morning duty)
To thy paternal kiss ; earth's filial beauty
Tarries alone thy rising to arise :
The Mountains farther east are antedating
Thy glory with lit summits ; the heaped Sea
Rims the horizon with a burning line :
No Hills have we, no glimmering Sea divine,
Yet our low elmy pastures are awaiting
Thy morning presence not less duteously.

VII.

COME, Spring, with me into a little cell
Where I and the wood-spirit (who she is
I know not, but her looks are full of bliss)
Live quietly alone : not kings that dwell
In the iron guard of thrice-walled citadel
Such safety know, not convent monks such peace,
As we but fenced by the incorporeal breeze,
But cloistered in our deep and grassy dell :
Thither ethereal Spring, come, come with me !
Not that we are not happy, but thy breath
May melt the crystal sky to deeper blue ;
Tempt out the flowers ; enkindle the dark hue
Of the grey water, which now sullenly
Sleeps in its stony basin, dark as death.

VIII.

O TIME, who sang thee first with hoary wings
And blue keen scythe,—a shape of shivering age,
Plying for aye a thankless pilgrimage
In ruthless strife among Earth's loveliest things ?
Was't not in winter with the ministerings
Of bellying clouds and huddling blasts to inspire,
And fingers cramped that groped upon the lyre,
And could not find the music of the strings ?
O had he sate with soft winds in his ear
As I, and watery murmurs blent therewith,
And fragrant grass (fresh as the heaven above),
Below him, he'd have made thee fair as Love ;
Given thee blithe ringlets for those locks so sere,
A stately river-lily for the scythe.

IX.

NOD on, meek snowdrops, so demurely gay !
Nod on—dance lightly ! for the sky above
Looks on you with an azure eye of love ;
A fatherly regard the wintry day
Doth for your sprightly innocence display ;
And the fierce wind, which in the forky pines
Above your heads incessantly wails and whines,
On you falls lightly as a breath of May.
A man, I think, in darkest mood of spleen,
Could scarce hold face against a glimmering joy
To see your child-like quire at their employ,
This tireless repetition of their game ;
And I, for other cause right glad, I ween,
Could shout aloud and leap to see the same.

X.

ON the other side of yon long row of trees
The young Spring passed : a joyous sunny gleam,
Hanging about her hair, did make her seem
A glorified Goddess. A delicious breeze
Warped the dry branches : and a look of ease
Calmed the wan turf whereon that lady walked ;
And daffodils, green-headed, golden-stalked,
(Being unripe) and wide-lipped crocuses,
And snowdrops lily-pale but marble-cold
Shot up, unsheathed from the secretive soil,
A carpet for her ; and a rainy scent
Descending from the unfreaked firmament
Gathered round nature's heart and made it bold,
Tempting her features to a sweet half-smile.

XI.

STRANGE power inhabits these fresh days of spring,
A strange expansive power, that almost storms
These walls of flesh, our dull corporeal forms,
Till the enfranchised Soul, a naked thing,
In innocent freedom with the spirit of spring
Spends peacefully her honey-moon,—too short,
For careless suns scorch in their wasteful sport
The tender leaves too soon, too early fling
A dimness on the turf. No care for this !
They are not yet—still fancy's vagrant wing
May ply its unchecked way o'er heaven and earth ;
And as to some wild rook that in his mirth
Dives in the yielding grass, the world that is
Will yield to her as gaily voyaging.

XII.

WHAT spell is in this day that here are met
March, April, May together? Braggart winds
Tie up earth's bosom; April rain unbinds;
May sunshine, scented with the violet,
Thwarts both. What needs the swarf and toil and
fret,

The anxiety of half-resolve and doubt,
O year, when March and April are run out,
And May upon her rightful throne is set?
O know thy mind; a resolute will pursue
And strengthen justice! clear the rebel train
Out of May's pathway; scourge the blustering
Powers;
Sweep the blue heaven of its encumbering showers;
Stand to thine own Anointed firm and true,
And since thou hast enthroned her, let her reign!

XIII.

“ COME, May, inspire me !” Not as men of old
Sought of Apollo and that Holiest Nine
The influence and energy divine,
Asked I thine aid, fair Spirit : yet behold !
Surely my heart some influence doth enfold,
Not earthly !—deep within, the secret mine
Of joy lies opened to the sunny shine ;
The soil of fancy swarms with flowers untold :
Some lingering river winds me in ; some star
Looks softly on me through a mist of gold ;
In leafy wreaths my limbs imprisoned are,
Spotted with hawthorn buds ; and roses bold
Mat my fresh forehead. Oh, not earth nor sky
Is gladder at thy coming, May, than I.

XIV.

SUCH dreams as lovers fancy in their moods
Of self-excluding selfishness, I dream ;
Rocking serenely on a lazy stream
Betwixt green banks encrowned with shady woods :
Fern hangs therefrom, and grass that with the flood's
Soft pulse sways slowly, greening the dark wave ;
And shine upon the waters branches brave
Of nut and alder, starred with crimsoned buds ;
And blackest shoots of ash keep serried line
On one side : on the other, pollard willow
Flings flickering shadows on the sleepy billow ;
And wayward ivy and the looped woodbine
Runs through the trees ; and, crowning all, above
Sits rosy Venus, star of Eve and Love.

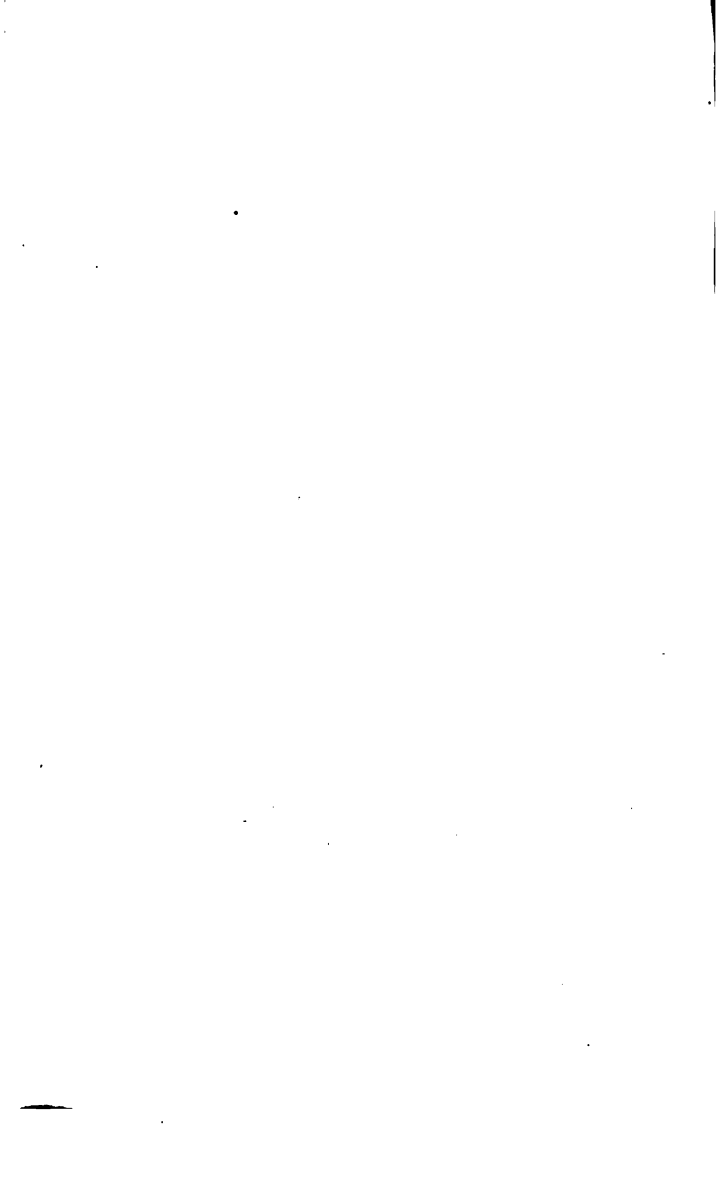
XV.

EARTH gives thee joy, thou yellow crescent moon !
From the full cups of flowers, from breathing grass,
From shy small waves that glitter as they pass,
From waving branches. Grateful for what boon,
Loves she the mistress of Night's quiet noon ?
For light that makes a silver-golden mass
Of each low pool,—a drop of opal glass
Of each long dewdrop on the stalks of June ?
Is it for this she thanks the bounteous Maid,
The Sun's fair Sister ? Student, from thy cell
Lean thy pale cheek and answer ! Gentle Lover,
Thou who hast sate within the beechen shade
All day, declare the secret ! O discover,
Hot-hearted Sinner ! Mourner, come and tell !



MISCELLANEOUS.

PART THE SECOND.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

PART THE SECOND.

I.

IN silent hours when I have felt
As but in silent hours we feel,
And all that in the past hath dwelt
The active present would reveal ;
Religion ! blissfully imbued
Into the depth of all the scene,
Thy light hath blest the solitude,
And made the silence more serene.

The night fleets on, the dream departs,
But still is left a kindly glow ;
For heaven is nearer to our hearts,
Than worldlings will believe or know :
And every beam of that world's bliss,
Though cast thro' clouds that close again,
In souls not all enslaved to this,
A cheering presence will remain.

II. THE POETS.

THERE is a meadow, which I know full well,
Near my own summer-home ; and by the stream,
Which idly flaps in many a tiny cell,
Scooped by some frenzy of its own, I deem,
Out of the loamy bank, I lie and dream
Whole sultry afternoons. Some willows there
Pile up their silvery cones beneath the beam
Of the broad sun, and win the laggard air
To dally with their boughs, they are so light and fair.

And a stiff alder feeding his green pride
From the fresh waters ; and an aged thorn,
Which to the very grass on either side
Bends his brown boughs most rugged and forlorn ;
And one old sloe-tree, polished by the horn
Of many a playful ram, fence round a place,
A place most pleasant, when the mists of morn
Are fled, and summer shows her unveiled face,
Oppressive for the weight of its exceeding grace.

'TWOULD seem the nook was furnished by kind elves
For Oberon's musing ; o'er the water's sound
The mossy trunk of one great Willow shelves,
Most slumberously easy ;—near the ground

A single twine of naked root runs round,
Catching a cushion of the leaves which fall
In twinkling showers for ever. Here imbound
In sleep's soft arms, I lie, a willing thrall,
Oft until evening's grey is gathered over all.

There I one evening lay ;—the sun was dying ;
Slant gleams shot off the corn upon the hill
Into the green recess where I was lying,
Of coy dame Fancy taking my sweet will :
My blood went pulsing with the soft half-thrill
Of strong enjoyment sinking into rest,
For I had just been bathing in the rill
My tired and heated limbs ; and now undrest
They lay by gentle airs in wanton play caressed.

I had been walking under roofed woods,
Thinking of dim, high temples, and the sound
Of low and dying hymns, like the flapping flood's
Soft sameness, which crept hushingly around ;
And every wrinkle in the mossy ground
Had seemed a yellow-mossed inscription, telling
Of those whose memories will be ever found
Writ on the living earth, the glorious dwelling,
Which they did honour once with presence more
excelling.

Then, like a child who with great names and
things
Deals lightly, wotting scarce what he may say,

I dreamed of all who from the Immortal Springs
Have filled and borne a deathless cup away ;
And haply thought whose wreath of living bay
I would the soonest wear if I might choose :
So did I spend the hours of dying day,
And the white moonlight sparkling in the dews
Shone into my dim eyes before I ceased to muse.

Would I could count the sights that crossed my
soul !
Sometime methought I saw an ancient oak,
The father of a forest ; on its bole
Shone steady light, and shifting splendour broke
From its stirred leaves as the autumn wind awoke ;
But chiefest glory of the ancient tree,
A Lyre was hung thereon, which never spoke
But once, when Ariosto's fingers free
Troubled the silent hours of its tranquillity.

And then again another fancy came.
A broad-based monument before my eye
Grew up. Of marble seemed it, cold as fame,
And more eternal. Mightily on high
From out its very middle to the sky
A Pillar towered, like some old Elm, whose root
Is heaped with the leaves of many a century
And Dante's forehead on its top was put,
Bound with the deathless plant which only bears
no fruit.

Then I did look upon another shape.
A proud strong Eagle on a dizzy height
Sate fearfully. Upon the kingly nape
Of his high neck a golden chain was pight ;
Else had he winged his bold unbashful flight
Into the Heaven of Heavens. His mighty eye
Sternly drank in the sunbeams, as of right
His dwelling were among the clouds on high,
Which strew the great sun's path along the morn-
ing sky.

This meant the poet of Lost Paradise.
Then a fresh form upon my sight did creep ;
A milk-white lamb, with pleading upturned eyes,
Deep as the heavens reflected there, did keep
A noontide rest in grasses green and deep :
Many rich flowers were thereabout dispread,
And small gold-winged flies did rustling leap
Among them ; and a guarded fountain head
Made music sweet, with which that Creature's
soul was fed.

This emblem was of Spenser well I knew.
Then I looked round, and lo ! a new conceit :
A lovely serpent, dim, yet bright of hue,
(Most like a misted prism) about my feet
With wavelike motion, most serene and sweet,
Wound harmlessly ; its eyes, as moist and beam-
ing

As some young hopeless lover's when they meet
That other which avoids them, dwelt in seeming
Upon my fear; half love, half grief at my mis-
deeming.

Thus fancy pictured Shelley. Then a Boy
 Stood up before me ; tall and large of brow,
 Among high lilies laughing in the joy
 Of June, he stood ; Endymion had stood so,
 I ween ; so musing in the sunny glow
 Of night and Dian's arms. How gloriously
 Shone that white forehead ! yet there lurked below
 A small black worm, which marked that he
 should die, [eye.
 No less than that fierce light which overflowed his

And this was Keats. A mystic Harp, twined round
With delicate flowers, no growth of common earth,
Stood next before me. Silence most profound
Held it at first ; then fitfully gushed forth
Mysterious echoes of melodious mirth ;
None knew their wherefore save himself who gave
With his wild hand the wondrous music birth,
An Ancient Man, to whose wise glances clave
Light cheer, like grasses green gladdening a secret
grave.

Thus saw I Coleridge. Then again a change :
A goodly Pile I saw, upbuided high
Into a stormy heaven ; in many a range,

Arch above arch ran up into the sky,
A mound of building; terraced gorgeously
Were its inclining sides, and tree and flower
Varied its face, as oft you may espy
Upon great Indian palaces: each bower
Lived, but the frame was clay and shrank with
every shower.

In such an emblem Byron did I dress;
But my thought changed yet once again, and now
Upon a flowery plot in quietness
Sate an Old Man with calm and reverend brow,
And eyes, which looked into the flowers as though
They held unto his gaze a written book;
And thence he read, in words most sweet and low,
Tales hidden of earth's common things; the brook,
Lake, and inspiring hills, and soothing forest nook.

And this was Wordsworth, Earth's Interpreter
Unto the dull of ear; and I had long
Listed his glorious musings, but the stir
Of love within me craved another song:
And I took off my eyes, and the thick throng
Of waiters for his place before my brain,
Drove on that meek Old Man: but then a tongue
Of such sweet ravishment as ne'er again
May turn a deep delight into a rapturous pain,

Crept round me—oh! so winningly, that all
The crowd of musical voices ceased to sing,

And breathlessly I listened till the fall ;
Then starting looked whose fingers struck the
 string ;
But I saw nothing, save a glistening
Of golden beams, such as do weave a crown,
Insufferably blazing, for the King
Of Day, when from his eastern throne come
 down
He looks o'er sea, and earth, and air without a
 frown.

Slowly (the while the heavenly strain grew
 sweeter)
The spreading hair of that so wondrous light
Centred to one large burning Star ; oh, meeter
To hang upon the forehead of the Night,
Than all the million constellations bright
That ever flout the presence of young morn
With the cold radiance of their proud despite.
But the deep joy with which my soul was torn
Was far, I ween, too sweet to be by mortal borne ;

And Shakspeare waked me. Now the grass was
 hoar
With summer's rivalry of winter's frost ;
And the white moon outspread her radiance froze
Over the broad still meadow-sward, embossed
With ladysmock and kingcup, and the host
Of summer's menials, in whose gaudier hue

The native green by day was well-nigh lost :
But all was covered now with glimmering dew,
And slept all sober-sad and modest to the view.

But I arose and left that meadow fair,
Whereon the silver moon so coldly shined,
And towards the edging of thick trees which there
Cut their dark outline on the grass, inclined
My homeward steps, and soon I left behind
The small brook's shiver, and, the little hill
Ascending, mixed among dear faces kind ;
Glad in their human love to warm and fill
A heart by lonely thought made something dull and
chill.

III. SONG.

BLAME me not, sweetest, that I play
With pleasures which thou dost not share ;
Another's eyes sometimes obey,
And sometimes wreath another's hair ;
My fancies may with others be,
But oh, my heart is still with thee !

Some joys so deeply sweet are ours
That in fond fear to call them up,
We dally with the gaudy flowers
That crown the margin of the cup,
And thus awhile I bend the knee
To others, ere I kneel to thee !

But if thou chidest, I have done :
And light the task such chains to break ;
In thy sweet strength the glory won,
The toil encountered for thy sake ;
And then my fancies too will be
Where my heart is—with thee !—with thee !

IV. THE AWAKING OF THE SLEEPER.

SHE wakes ! the impatient blood springs up
From slumber's chain to claim its right ;
And sudden, like a mantling cup,
Her cheek o'erflows with rosy light.

And those large eyes awake and play,
With mustered glory newly burning ;
Like stars that nurse their fires by day
At even to their task returning.

V. SLEEP'S PRAISE.

DEAR ———, would that thou wert here !

A simple wish, yet true,
And linked to visions far more dear
Than ever fancy drew :
The vision of thine own soft eyes,
Thy voice's pleasant tone,
The pressure of thy hand, that tries
Kind contest with mine own.

Thine eyes raised fondly unto mine,
Thy soft brown eyes I see,
And meanings soft that in them shine,
All born of love to me :
I know not if to others they
Wear such a gentle glow,
But they are lovelier than the Day
To me, full well I know.

I feel thee nestling in my breast,
My arms about thee twined ;
My head bent down takes happy rest,
Upon thine own reclined :
My arm is at thy side the while,
And when thy heart beats fast,
I start, and catch the meaning smile
So fondly upward cast.

O blessed be sleep that can o'erleap
The toils of time and place,
And bring the lonely ones that weep,
To converse face to face !
There lie long miles of fertile land
Betwixt me and my joy,
And yet in sleep I hold thy hand,
And press thy cheek, my boy !

VI. TO A LITTLE SISTER.

COME to me, child, come climb my knee,
Kiss me, nurse me, fondle me,
Blessedest creature 'neath the skies ;
Wind thy little arms about me,
With thy flaxen tresses flout me,
Flinging them upon my eyes.
Kiss me; kiss me, little sister,
Far I went, oh far away,
Many a long and lingering day,
Shall I tell her how I missed her,
Little darling and her play ?

There were friends, kind friends and many,
Where I went, yet still I said,
“ Oh, I want the best of any !
Where you are not, little Fanny,
Who shall comfort me instead ? ”
Some were men with fiery passions
Writ on brows not all unscathed,
In the Styx of worldly fashions
They their tender hearts had bathed ;
Surely none of these were they
Who could teach—if so could any—
To forget your graceful play,
Pure and peaceful sister Fanny !
Some are fond and gentle-souled,

And their love sweet rest ensures,
Yet their greetings seemed but cold,
And their love but dead to yours.
They can never climb my knee,
Kiss me, nurse me, fondle me,
Make me lie and hide my face
And the woofullest case to feign,
Pressure close and dear embrace
Of thy smooth soft arms to gain ;
Or to win by feigning slumber
(While a sly still watch I keep)
Balmy kisses without number,
Showered upon my seeming sleep.

Blessedest creature, mildest-eyed,
Meekest-mannered, gentlest-hearted !
I'll not murmur at thy side
Of the time when we were parted ;
Come, sweet sister, climb my knee,
Kiss me, nurse me, fondle me !

VII.

I've loved thee now, my little boy,
Thro' many a mood of wayward feeling,
And grief hath wrought thee no annoy,
And when my heart was drunk with joy,
I felt the intoxication stealing
With treacherous influence through my frame,
Yet loved thee, loved thee still the same.

In joy I loved thee well, heaven knows,
And in these recent hours of sorrow,
When dawn seemed dark as evening's close,
Still softly through the gloom arose
The purpling streaks of this to-morrow,
And still to thee my spirit came,
And loved thee, loved thee still the same.

And when my earliest worldly care
Closed round ; and by its shade was driven
The light of earthly things most fair,
And even heaven's light shone dimly there,
One star amid my darkened heaven
Yet burnt with calm unflickering flame,
I loved thee, loved thee still the same.

Yet not alone in joy and woe ;
For when my soul was stirred in travail

Of that new birth that irked me so,
And all my ties to things below
 My heart was busy to unravel,
One purest bond I yet might claim,
And love thee, love thee still the same.

So fear not thou, nor will I fear
 That aught shall work our love's defeature;
It stood when life and death drew near,
It stood while angels tarrying here
 Changed earthly to an heavenly nature,
And now be sure, come praise or blame,
I'll love thee, love thee still the same.

VIII.

THE fields have got their bounds at last,
A visible confinement ;
Of green protection from the blast
Their summer's full assignment :
No matter though the shade o'erhead
Be something of the thinnest ;—
Thy work, blithe spring, will soon be sped,
But end as thou beginnest.

But work as blithely on and on,
Glad spring ! the elms are greening ;
His crimson crowns the larch hath won ;
His grandeur overweening
The chestnut hath begun to wear ;
The oaken sprouts are tender ;
The beech upon the illumined air
Unfolds a golden splendour.

The currant walls are full of flower,
Behold, the fair pale clusters
Are lengthening, lengthening hour by hour ;
The careful pear-tree musters
His blossoms for a stealthy show
In nooks and corners suiting ;

The tender peach is fair in blow,
Yet fairer than in fruiting !

The wanton cherry hides his joy
In mimicry of winter ;
Like lines of snow his branches lie
Shot from a snowy centre,
A radiant image !—far and wide
The strawberry flowers are crowding ;
Stars which no night can wholly hide,
Nor clouds be overclouding.

The dog-rose shoots are yet astray
'Twixt colour and material ;
The woodbine spray might fade away
In radiance aerial,
So faint it is, upon the tree
So light the leaflets quiver ;—
A visible scent that green might be,
Or a shadow in a river.

O spring, while thou wert taking rest
A weary time we waited ;
The fire of hope within the breast
In turn increased, abated ;
We watched the change of every breeze,
Each cloud the breeze impeding ;
Bare as a row of leafless trees
Crept day to day succeeding.

But then arose upon the gloom
This dawn ; those feeble creepers
Were buried in a flowery tomb,
With April showers for weepers ;
Now comes a franker Set—in haste
Of well-doing, unwearied,
Yet still is plain and uneffaced
The tomb where those are buried. .

No matter !—nay, 'tis well, 'tis best,
'Tis joy's most sure assurance
To bear engraven in the breast
The signs of past endurance ;
That smile is sweetest which comes thus
From grief ; most safe that pleasure,
Which God Himself hath offered us,
And mixed in His own measure. .

IX. AN OLD MAN TO HIS LITTLE CHILD.

'COME, come, my child, come play, come play,
The sun so bright will fade away,—
Come haste ere yet thine hour be past
And thy young life's sky grow overcast.

Ay, 'twill be so, my little child,
Thy spring must some time be defiled,
It cannot run for long below
But something will bedim its water,
Oh be it but a rock to throw
A shade, and not a stain, to flow
Still with the stream, my daughter !
God grant it be no more than this ;
And yet 'tis sad to think of thee,
When that sweet eye that now with bliss
Runs over, catching from the kiss
Of sunbeams dwelling lingeringly,
That shifting, eddying, gentle light
So dear unto an old man's sight
Whose own is dim as dim can be,—
When that shall be as dim as his,
Yet thou not half so old as he !

Surely 'tis saddening so to think,
Yet surely, surely 'twill be so ;

And thou wilt sit beside the brink
Of this great whirling world, and throw
Thy loves thereon,—to float and flow
Awhile, and then to sink !

Oh my soul grieves to dwell thereon ;
'Twould be so, if I had no share
Of thine affection more than One
Who never looked on thee till now,
Might claim in right of silver hair
From one so young as thou.
A debt doth Childhood owe to Age,
Their gentlest play, their sweetest smile,
The aching spirit to assuage
Ere yet a farther pilgrimage
It take, unto that blissful isle,
Which ever lieth just before us,
From the first hour we draw our breath
To that when peace at last comes o'er us
In the still hour of death ;
That isle which some call love, and some
Call peace, and some, I ween, call fame,
Whence none that reach it, ever come
To signify its name.

How well thou listenest, Little One,
And yet thou knowest not the meaning.
Of half my words,—but I have done,
And surely, child, thy patient gleaning
Of wisdom's ears to thee yet green,

Strown by thine earthly sire, I ween,
May be a lesson well for me
To learn and store that I the rather
With ear as glad, and faith as free,
May list the dark lore dealt to me
By my eternal Father !

X. INSCRIPTION

FOR AN ARBOUR FORMED OUT OF A LARGE
CLEMATIS.

Now if thy heart be fitly framed to meet
The kindly purpose of this sunny seat,
Call for the viol, reach the goblet down ;
I'll give the lyre a wreath, the cup a crown.

XI. TRANSLATION. *ÆNEID* IV. 522-9.

'Twas night, and weary things through all the
earth

Were tasting placid slumber; and the woods,
And the fierce surface of the sea had rest;
—The hour when all the stars in middle lapse
Are rolling, and the earth is still below;
The cattle of the field, and the gay fowl,
And all that in the liquid lake's expanse,
Or in the tufted champaign, lives and dwells,
All 'neath the still night-heaven lying asleep,
Rested; forgetful of the toils of day.

XII. A VISION FOR A MAY NOON.

A LONG, long avenue of noble Trees,
Between whose feet, and shadowed by whose shade
A lucid tide, untroubled by the breeze,
To their dark boughs a watchful mirror made :
And silvery voices through the verdant screen
Stealing, and trembling on the quiet flood ;
And pauses of a sweeter hush between,
But broken by the softly-pulsing blood ;
And maidens in a ring about a boy,
Where the tide ended in a grassy shelf ;
Whose floating tresses 'twas his fond employ
To pleach with rosy garlands for himself,
And tap their dewy cheeks and kiss their lips,
And be as half a lover, half a brother,
And lead their eyes into a soft eclipse
With playful pressure, now one, now another ;
Sometimes half veiling blue eyes with their lid
To see them shadowed through the filmy veil,
Now letting fiery orbs be semi-hid
In contrast with the enclosure lily-pale.

XIII. YESTERDAY.

YESTERDAY ! 'tis past—'tis gone,
Life and Love so hurry on.
Love and Hope and Joy embracing !
Where is fled that band so gay ?
Seraph's arms are interlacing,
Lo ! they bear them far away :
Fitting portage ! worthy freight !
Heaven is glad at guests so fair,
Music echoes in the air,
But the earth is desolate.

Yesterday I sate beside
Him I loved at eventide :
Calmly in the consecration
Of a hope attained with toil,
Love's strong thrill and exultation
Fell to silence and a smile :
I perceived the earth meanwhile
Rolling underneath my feet,
'Twas a motion strange and sweet ;
Films of shadow did beguile
Silly Eve of all her treasure ;
Crimson larch-buds in the green

Lamped no more ; no more were seen
Daisies set in merry measure,
Merry measure yet serene.
Low and lower sang the cuckoo,
Faint and fainter answered Echo :
All the while my love and I
Saw one sight, the sparkling sky ;
Heard one sound, the night's still tread
Underfoot and overhead ;
Felt one feeling, round, above,
Below, but most within,—'twas love.

There is a time when love is more
Than life ; and there are some so free
From clogging earth's infirmity,
That their pure spirit bubbles o'er
This golden goblet of our flesh,
Alike at Morning clear and fresh,
And Noon, and Night ; alone at Even,
When earth holds colloquy with heaven,
Comes such high mood to me ;
But *then*, or if not only so,
Yet oftenest and with deepest glow.

Shadowy films stole one by one
Silly Eve's delight away ;
Her bright crown that by her lay
(Woven wild flowers fair and gay),
Night first laid her hand upon,
Then as though in stealthy play,

Weighing by the impurpled rim
To the attendant seraphim,
Quick she gave the cirque, which they
To her treasure caves convey.
Grass grew brown that had been green ;
Hawthorn buds retired to keep
Pensive watch or quieter sleep ;
In the meadow that had been
As a joyous congregation,
For its stirring eager glee,
Silence with the adumbration
Deepened, deepened sensibly.
Crake among the bladed corn,
Stirring cuckoo in the thorn,
Thrush, and finch, and larch were still ;
Down the valley, up the hill
Ran the water's voice subdued ;
Was it strange that holy mood
Gathered like a voice divine,
Round our hearts, my love's and mine ?

Yesterday is fled ; the blank
Of a Night most dark and dank
Hath defiled the blissful eve !
Shadows ready to deceive
Hung around, their hue was fair,
Love and Joy are hidden there.

XIV. RETURN.

“ THE stream which in some meadow sward
Goes doubling, like a thing in fear,
Is not so fond of its long grass,
And shadowy lights that come and pass,
As I of those sweet thoughts that guard
My lingering sojourn here.”

So thought I, when two years ago
I, half a man and half a boy,
Looked sadly forward to the day
When my life's stream should turn away
From this green land to which I owe
So long a course of joy.

My friends derided me for this :
And straightway my impatient blood
Reproved me for the hasty doubt
That there was land as fair without,
A land as fair and full of bliss,
Though of a sterner mood.

So forth I went in youthful glee !
As frolic as a spring that leaps

To change its quiet verdurous nest,
A hollow in the mountain's breast,
For granite cleft precipitously,
Ravines, and shelves and steeps.

I went : I left this sunny shade ;
I passed into a gloomy air ;
No wonder that the animal blood
Could never stir to any good
The cold damp gloom on all bespread,
The chill spread everywhere.

Some eves there were when sunnier cheer
Clothed heaven's bedarkened dome ;
Some nights when in the cloisters' state,
Or groves with spring illuminate,
I walked with friends long known, and dear,
And felt *almost* at home.

But still my heart uneasily
Took pleasure even of that which pleased ;
The flower-plots might be fair and fine,
I only felt they were not mine,
And what I cropt with thievish glee
I cropt, and joy diseased.

But now among my olden haunts
I walk at home by Avon's side—
At home ! my heart with gathered wings
Sits quiet on her nest and sings ;

She knows her place, she knows her wants,
And how they are supplied.

Who on a barren moor hath been
Pelted with hail as sharp as glass ?
Let him be folded suddenly
In a green field with a blue sky,
Walled round with elm trees tall and green,
And spread with greenest grass ;

The sun will breathe upon his cheek
With almost fatherly protection :
The visitings of the outer breeze,
That struggle through the jealous trees,
Will be like kisses kind and meek
Of sisterly affection.

With such a grateful quietness
Among my olden haunts I go ;
And own again earth's genial power,
Laid up in sky and field and flower,
The swelling wolds to breathe and bless,
The azure heavens to glow.

XV.

I KISSED her lids so motionless,
I kissed her lips,—she never stirred :
I whispered in her ear,—I guess
That loving tone she never heard :
Dead to my praise and my caress
Was my sweet singing-bird.

Darts of a sunny light shot in
Through shutter old and green old glass,
They cut the dusk,—they lit the skin
With lustre *outside* warm,—alas,
The bed itself was warm *within*
As that sweet body was !

XVI. ARMORIA'S GARDEN.

THE place was silent, but most beautiful ;
And for the habitation of strange forms
Such as old Pan, well fitted, but no less
Nay more, for creatures of a pure pale grace
Like Dryads—shadowy spirits of the trees.

Flowers of all country's kinds were gathered there
Uprising vase-like shapes of bush and stalk
Gemmed with all colours and all shapes of bud,
And sweeping trails of amaranthine blooms
Crossing the lucent air, aswing or still,
Rosy or white or pleading violet,
With surfeit of sweet scent weighed down and sick,
Or barren to all harvest save of sight.

All kinds of trees were there, graceful or strong :
Palms bowing or quite still (as listening
Unto the whispering wind,) big chestnut boughs
Such as roof over Ætna's choicest shelves ;
Fir ; spicy walnut ; feathery tamarisk,
Lady of trees ; and graceful willow sad,
With whose grey leaf lorn lovers deck themselves ;
Ash, both which lays light finger on the breeze
Aspiring, and her sister that bends back
Her bashfuller branches from the bold blue sky
Even as a creature fearful or ashamed ;

Pines with their cones thickset, and mighty oak,
And heavy fig, and pattering sycamore,
All mingled there from east or golden west
Or north or sunny south,—to frame a place
Of walled and roofed arcade and pillared aisle,
Branching away into dim nave and choir
And cupola above and niche (wherein
Lay saint-like forest flower, so frail and meek)
And all the graceful or aspiring forms
That art imagines and man's hand perfects.

XVII. AN ARIA.

LOVE me, fair lady, for my golden hair !
The kneeling stripling sighed. The lady said :
Though sunset's glory on thy locks were shed,
And brilliance like the rising sun's were there,
'Twere yet no gain to thee, I should not care.
The willow boughs that dally with the spring
Are to my soul as much a dearer thing
As to my simple eye they are more fair.
Then he devised another fruitless prayer ;
Quoth he : My tongue is deftly set and sharp,
I can speak music like that twangling harp
That holds sweet colloquy with the evening air.
Said she : I doubt not, yet the simple voice
Of one meek flower that humbly doth rejoice
And counts its graces borrowed, I declare,
Hath to my ear a tone more soft and rare
Than thy twined mazes of a selfish pride,
Which music's labyrinths, impotent to hide,
Make known, as clear as it unguarded were.
Now rack me, lady, said the youth, my wit
Was cunningly tortured to a converse fit
To shew thine own perfections :—soothly there
Thou hast well taught me of what worth they are.

XVIII.

THEY say that love is full of fears,
And well I know they speak the truth,
For I have loved, with smiles and tears
And all the fiery haste of youth ;
And I have had in woman's breast
A partner for my grief and joy,
Yet never felt that perfect rest
Which now I feel in thee, my boy !
Till friendship's chain is snapt in twain
I will not sue to love again.

Let woman's eyes in truth or guile
Weep, laugh, or sneer, 'tis nought to me,
While I command thy sunny smile,
And live with friendship and with thee ;
Love's cheek will shrink, his hair turn grey,
His lip grow thin, his eye grow dull,
While thou to me, boy, day by day
Canst only grow more beautiful ;
Changing the child's for manhood's dress,
And innocence for uprightness.

Aye, friend, young friend, a single day
To see thee smile and hear thee speak,

Were joy enough to smooth away
An age of wrinkles from the cheek ;
And if so blest a state as this
God willeth should not thus remain,
I will not grieve, thou'lt be in bliss
And I—oh surely not in pain,
For when thou'rt gone, my heart must be
In highest heaven along with thee !

XIX. INSCRIPTION FOR A FOUNTAIN.

LEAN down, O stranger ! if thine ear be pure
Thou shalt hear music leaning so, be sure,
Sweet tiny music in my plashing falls
Inwoven, with serenest intervals.
It is the Spirit of the Spring who calls,
Wherefore lend thou a pure and patient ear
And be thou strong of faith and persevere.

XX. SIR LEONARD.

A DARK red stain is on his hand,
His hand is redder than his face ;
His face is yellow as the sand ;
His brow is shrunk as if a band
Of scorching iron ringed it round ;
And he is in a secret place,
A-lying on the ground.

Into the loose blue loamy mould
He thrusts his hand—'tis haply hot ;
For Leonard is a warrior bold,
His dagger's hilt is rough with gold
And jewels sharp and apt to gall,
—That yellow brow, that ruddy spot,
O heed them not at all !

Sir Leonard homeward went. He heired
His kinsman's land—hill, wood, and glade ;
But never more his wrist he bared
To man or woman loved or feared ;
No hawk sate there from Whitsun eve,
But night and morn, and sun and shade,
He hid it in his sleeve.

XXI.

'Tis past for me,
The sorrow and the shame is past away ;
 The eye which painfully
Looked on thine honour's sudden disarray
Hath worn its path, and speeds without dismay ;
 Nay, joy hath taken root,
 Blossomed and borne its fruit,
Upon the rifted tree but smitten yesterday.

'Tis past for me,
The cloud is melted into milky rain ;
 The lily sad to see
Hath lifted up its pearly head again ;
Therefore 'tis past, the sorrow and the pain ;
 And shame is swiftly bent
 Into a blithe content,
And pride hath found a soil in seeming of disdain.

XXII.

If I desire with pleasant songs
To throw a merry hour away,
Comes Love unto me, and my wrongs
In careful tale he doth display,
And asks me how I stand for singing
While I my helpless hands am wringing.

And then another time if I
A noon in shady bower would pass,
Comes he with stealthy gestures sly
And flinging down upon the grass,
Quoth he to me : my master dear,
Think of this noontide such a year !

And if elsewhere I lay my head
On pillow with intent to sleep,
Lies Love beside me on the bed,
And gives me ancient words to keep ;
Says he : these looks, these tokens number,
May-be, they'll help you to a slumber.

So every time when I would yield
An hour to quiet, comes he still ;
And hunts up every sign concealed
And every outward sign of ill ;
And gives me his sad face's pleasures
For merriment's or sleep's or leisure's.

XXIII. GOD'S GIFT.

God gave a precious gift to me, a gift of love and
bliss,
A friend in whom my trust, my hope, and all my
pleasure is :
O friend, young friend ! deceive me not, nay, thou
hast not power, in sooth,
For thou art God's own gift to me, who is the God
of Truth.

A year, a perfect year, my love, I've known and
loved thee now,
Nor seen one stringing of the lip, one darkening
of the brow ;
Nor heard one tone of sneer or scorn, one tone too
proud or free ;
One wayward word to any one, far less, far less
to me !

I saw thee and I sought thee, 'twas a prize that
might repay
For many a night of weariness and many a weary
day ;
I have sought thee, I have won thee ; oh the net
is firm and fast,

And thy heart of hearts, my timorous bird ! is
mine, is mine at last !

And *I* love *thee*, how fervently ! As a father loves
his son,
As a brother loves his brother who hath never had
but one,
As a mother loves the tiny thing that lies across
her knee,
So faithfully, so fondly I, my little friend, love thee.

We are not made alike, young friend ! thine eye
is full of ease,
Thy heart is pure, and deep, and full as a spring
among the trees ;
And a playing-place for dainty smiles is that fair
cheek of thine,
And glimpses of a joyful peace less earthly than
divine.

And I—but if I am not thus—if weary in my youth,
Weary of long and fruitless search for love, and
peace, and truth,
I've wandered, to my sorry night be thou the
joyous day ;
In thine innocence will I be calm, and in thy good-
ness gay.(8)

XXIV.

MAIDENS ! what's the matter here ?

What sly snake hath stung us ?
Heaving heart, and sigh, and tear !

Ah ! young Love's among us !
Come ! join hands—be quick—be still,
And we'll hunt him out, we will !

He has rosy cheeks, be't said ;
Eyes of starry lustre ;
Round his lips so ripe and red
Milky dimples muster ;
But he's armed and stout of limb,
So we must be rid of him.

He has arrows sharp and sure,
And a bow—the strongest ;
Whom he wounds will want a cure,
'Twill be of the longest ;
Arrowy glances, whispers small,
These are what he fights withal.

Who is here with starry eyes,
Cheeks like snow sun-smitten,
Melting lips, like strawberries
Begging to be bitten ?

Seize the same, if such there be,
She's in the conspiracy.

But who here with charms and wit
Hath a kindly nature ?
There's the boy, be sure of it,
She conceals the traitor ;
Rid of her—ah ! then, I know
Love will never plague us so !

SONNETS

PERSONAL AND OCCASIONAL.



SONNETS.

I.

A SPLENDOUR lodges in the tents of night ;—
Yon blazing sun with all his thronging train
Of amber cloudlets flecked with purple grain
But now is entered in : how gay and bright
Must be the interior presence, what delight
On the dark forehead of the Ethiop eve
Once more the spousal Glory to receive !
—With such fond shapes did the antique fancy spite
Her own bedarkened soul ; yet have we leave
To trick our knowledge with like graceful art ;
Yet may we, dallying with a similar skill,
Give God's obedient orb a regal will
And form and members ; and to shadowy eve
Assign a tented home and woman's heart.

II. TO STEPHEN LANGTON,

WHO DIVIDED THE BIBLE INTO CHAPTERS AND
VERSES.

LANGTON ! a due of praise not easily paid,
And thanks than praise thrice heavier, unto thee
By every Christian votary offered be !
Our rich but tangled Eden thou hast made
Familiar as the garden where we played
In childhood safely ; with observant grace
Leading a broad highway to each high place,
Laying a path through every darkened glade.
Many in watches of the night awake
Have thanked thee ; many in the mid-day sun ;
Many when mindful age and sickness sore
Stung them ; in youth and health full many an one ;
But on that bed, where all for once partake
Terrorless hope, or hopeless terror, more.

III. TO THE SAME.

SOME to wild hope and craving desolation
Giving fond ear, have deemed that earthly word
To dead men's souls in gratitude preferred,
Word of praise, prayer, thanks, love, commemora-
tion,
Upfloating, like a dewy exhalation,
The quiet heights of heaven's own air hath stirred;
A thing not unacceptably seen and heard
By blissful angels in supremest station.
If this be so, a glitter of bright thanks,
Langton, upon thy course of heavenly duty
Must wait, like mists that trace a river's banks
About a fertile flat in glimmering beauty,
What time the sun is wan and near to die,
And evening's planet largest in the sky.

IV. WILDERSMOUTH.

THOSE wavy Tors ! in many a mid-day dream
My fancy up the furzy steep hath twined,
And brought the influence of the fresh sea-wind
Down to the combe, beneath a sultry beam
Languidly stretched in slumber ; still I seem
Beneath the damp shade of the rocks to find
The urchin and the cowrie fairly lined,
And satinstone of soft and snowy gleam :
And still the straggling Wilder to waylay
With piled-up fragments ; to deceive again
The limpet weary of the weighty sea ;
To catch once more the impooled anemone,
Which, all unconscious of the ebbing main,
Shone, as a midnight rainbow softly gay.

V.

It is no ready coin of the lavish tongue
That coins its own and scants not of its gifts,
If I affirm that now my Cottage lifts
Its snowy brow with purple clusters hung ;
If now the home, fore-honoured and fore-sung
Opens its quiet chambers, low nor light,
Yet gladdened by the wave, whose shadows bright
Through casements wide on roof and wall are flung :
The humming burden of a sea self-pleased,
And fretted by no ebb like ours at home,
Sings ever through the air, itself so quiet ;
And cheerful vines, proud of their fruitage, riot
Under the eaves, and up the rooftree roam,
Their gadding humour scarce ev'n then appeased.

VI

LIKE some half-seen and half-imagined Star,
Guessed in the blue when sun and moon are meeting,
Methinks the Italian land so fair and far
Across the sea deutes a fancied greeting :
The golden waves, from that rich land retreating,
Toy with the prey that will be theirs so soon ; (9) .
And Nice's silver bells beneath the moon
Are now to eve their gentle faith repeating.
I can already see the encrimsoned strand,
Dowered by the sunset ; and the snowy Hills
Lift a continuous crown into the sky
Upon the left : and where methinks I stand,
A little myrtle-guarded Cottage fills
Its small home-plot with peace, and love, and joy.

VII.

UNTO the hills and groves of other lands
Thou, little book, art giv'n ; all these soft leaves,
Rustling so freshly to each breeze that weaves
Its delicate network o'er the fair sea sands ;
These fragile flowers that with their milky hands
Catch and keep prisoners all odours sweet ;
These hills that meet to part, and part to meet ;
And this wild brook, the meadow's pleasant bands,
Are fair, how fair !—But not for thee, I ween,
They utter sweetness from a hundred tongues :
Thou art the mirror whereupon must twine
Fairer in shadow the delicious vine,
Faithfully flattered ; and the measured throngs
Of cypress boughs with Roman stars between.

VIII. THE TEMPLE-CAVES OF ELEPHANTA,

IN THE BAY OF BOMBAY.

LAME grandeur—grace forlorn!—such consolation
Speak we of halls by Time's inconstant whim
Wounded, then healed : in this vast antre dim
A lowlier mood befits, for here Creation
Worked half the work, man's slow co-operation
But niching and enchiselling God's design ;
Nature and art co-workers. See ! the brine
Is here, the mindful sea's commemoration
(Annually served) of brotherhood in birth : (10)
No place is this by freak of doting Time
Untenanted ; this plashy Chamber's shade
Man fled in fear ; but nature undismayed
Still dwells here, careless that the giddy Earth
Flouts the dark portal with its goldenest clime.

IX.

Most glad it is to view a pleasant thing
That shall be soon to us but is not yet,
All stealthy, like the greenness of the spring
The foresent brightness of its coming set
Upon life's trodden paths;—more glad, how oft,
Than that it heraldeth. So have I met
The dawning on a mountain-top, while soft
As one that doth unvest a wounded man,
He hath disgirt him of his mists, and laid
His scarred beauty bare; and more my sight
Was pleased when glade stole softly after glade,
And purple knoll and steamy lake grew bright,
Than when my eye with easy compass ran
O'er his broad brow encrowned with perfect
light. (11)

X. ON CERTAIN PSALMODY.

THE rudest minstrelsy that ever woke
A smile upon a Lyrist's cheek is this ;
Yet words of love, and holiest happiness
Are buried in the noise ; and every stroke
Of that dull voice fastens a heavier yoke
On words by David uttered, while the morn
Gleefully tossed his hoary hair forlorn,
And wrapt the harp in the uplifted cloak ;—
Dress, heart, and spirit wild with one delight !
But so 'tis the condition of our being
That we from pain, annoyance, and unrest,
Must sift our blessings, if we would be blest ;
Through earth's discordancies of sound and sight
With inner apprehension, hearing, seeing.

XI.

YOUTH hath a house, a lean and raftered place,
Which hath two windows turned to Love and Fame;
Fair prospects either whereupon to gaze,
Methinks I now may shortly read the same :
Green is the First, a smooth and swarded land,
Dipping and folding into gentle vales;
Flowery and warm it is, and near at hand,
And golden sunshine sleeps in all the dales;
But full of naked peaks, all bare and cold,
And glinting to a moon most calm and bright,
The Other Region, rugged to behold,
Keeps afar off a still and stern delight.
Now have I read them, and I know full well
On which my eye would rather choose to dwell.

XII.

THE still moon peering through half-parted folds
Of silken curtains into chambers warm
With luxury and thronged with revellers,
In thoughtful minds a longing memory stirs
Of the pure splendours banished, and remoulds
The unshaped heart to nature's ancient form :
So is it when cold gleams of naked Truth,
Whose home is in a higher, purer sphere,
Shoot on us in our busy questioning
Of the eternal lips of the world's youth,
The Poets and the Sages of that Spring,
Which since hath come unto the blossoming ;
So then the heathen page is dropped in fear
Even as the winecup of the wassailer.

XIII.

SURELY they plead but ill who would excuse
The hardness of their nature, for that they
Live ever from the natural world away,—
Its mountains, meadows, valleys, streams ; and
bruise

Their hearts into unfeelingness with use
Continual and forced, of barren walls
Whereon the sun's bright presence never falls,
Nor cheering glitter of the starry dews.
This even have I stood within the heart
Of the stern city ; sluggishly crept round
The wintry mists, but blessedly above
Hung the meek crescent-moon in light and love,
And never would I pleasure more profound
Than that I tasted in the echoing mart.

XIV. TO THE STARS.

WHAT shall we call you, peaceful Visitants ?
Glad eyes of heaven, with light intelligent,
And comprehension, on our dwellings bent ?
Or, fitting still our fancies to our wants,
Shall we salute you as the lights made ready
In the far homes wherein we are to dwell,
Cheering us on through labour long and steady
That is between us and our tabernacle ?
Or, as the hurrying Sceptic's careless glance,
And stony heart would judge you, silly Balls
Played with for ever by an idle Chance,
Himself sole ruler in the heavenly halls ;
—Now thanks to that within us which refuses
Which it rejects to doubt, and which it chooses !

XV.

WHAT is thy lore, O dial of the sky,
Rare book with all thy golden letters rare ?
Broad Heavens ! unfold your lesson, for the prayer
Is humble ; what the profit if we lie
And glean the " harvest of a quiet eye ?"
Peace, in the silence of the kindled air,
Peace in each freighted star which, floating there,
Rides at its golden anchor peacefully.
O would that Man (a riotous multitude
Through all the earth) before his aching head
Sought the brief refuge of the hasty bed,
Would mark for one short moment the still mood
Of heaven above him, when the bright stars shed
Their silent influence ;—it would be for good.

XVI.

To souls bred up to learn what may be learned,
The blank of heaven with wisdom runneth o'er ;
Silence is oft a golden monitor :
And mutest flies, and insects undiscerned
By the bare eye, to those whose hearts have yearned
To know truth, wonder, and earth's noblest lore,
Have spoken to the heart and feeling more
Than hath to eye and hearing been returned
By colour, shape or voice ; wherefore have men,
The wisest, grudged not an unthrifty leaning
For hours against a tree in some still glen,
Or by the marge of brook or ocean ; gleaning
From all the wondrous things discovered then,
A rule for thoughts unjust or overweening.

XVII.

If I have dared too early to unlock
The sealed cavern of my inner heart,
And spied, where nestling in the barren rock
Of human passion, thou, sweet fountain, art
Whose suppliance, I would almost hope, may be
From the great depths of ancient poesy ;
Thou joyous fountain, chasing thine own waves
Round the smooth cauldron which thy game hath
worn :

Be he the judge whose own soul inly saves
One holy spot by life's rough jars untorn,—
A spot to turn to, or when fortune smiles not,
Or ache the sorrows time itself beguiles not ;
The home where dwell, or dwelt in days gone by,
The sisterhood unparted—Youth, Love, Poesy.

XVIII.

You need not tell me how they loved of yore—
Not that immortal Mantuan's golden strain, (12)
Not Shakspeare's liquid lute could teach me more
Than this apt heart within me, so refrain !
Love that is imaged by the ivy clothing
The furrowed elm with garlands never sere ;
Love, jealous heart to jealous heart betrothing,
With sacrament where faith hath conquered fear ;
Love, taught by Reason, (gentle Nature guiding
Her bright-eyed servant with a pure intent ;)
Love, o'er whose rites serenest Peace presiding,
May watch the revel with a brow unbent,
Such love have I and mine : what boots to tell
That Ancient Lovers did not love so well ?

XIX.

“ A GARLAND fashioned of the pure white rose ! ”

The words come to me at short intervals, (13)

As through fresh leaves some fitful wind that calls
To one whose cheek with thoughtful sunset glows.

Silently down the terraced hill there goes

A weeping maiden train ; a snowy pall's

White drapery on the still air swells and falls ;

A white-rose wreath in holiest repose

Lies on the bier, the emblem of the dead ;

Now see another gayer train that flows

Into the church,—a maiden young and fair

With ringlets gathered to a braid is there,

A braid that doth support upon her head

A garland, likewise, of the pure white rose !

XX. BOYHOOD'S BLISS.

Love, and the queen of love, the Cytheræan !
Lo ! here are words to lap the riper sense
In boyhood's blind sweet inexperience,
To win the man of twenty-one to be an
Imp of fifteen again, with hasty pæan
Saluting Pleasure as his conquest fit,
And Beauty, in whatever shape of it,
Loving with ardour Sapphic or Circean.
Woman, with languid eye luxuriously
Developed through the half-uplifted lid;
In summer leaves, thou amorous night-bird, hid,
I do believe ye know not how to die
So fervently on sight, or sound, or sigh,
Or aught delicious, as my boyhood did !

XXI. VENUS EMERGENS.

FAIR Venus sate upon her pearly shell;
And tho' the green wave amorously all round
Lipped the encrimsoned edges, yet the spell
Failed not by which the encroaching tide was bound.
There the young Goddess in the hollow sate,
Clasping one rosy ancle with her hand,
While her large eyes in wondering unrest
Ran o'er the azure arches of the sky.
In silence she upgazed, till two grey doves,
Flew down and nestled in her snowy breast;
Then shrieked aloud in sudden joy. Whereat,
From the dark covert of the green sea-groves,
Nereids trooped up, and Tritons carefully
Drew the fair bark, and fairer freight to land.

XXII. CONTINUED.

A SMOOTH-LIPPED Shepherd, dreaming of sweet eyes,
Among the Paphian thickets, saw afar,
The flashing of white arms and golden scales :
His dazzled eye then shading with his hand,
He watched the landward-floating companies,
Till, the crowd parting at the very shore,
Alone he saw the pearly shell draw near,
And she who shone upon it (like a star
Upon a moonlit cloudlet) step on land.
Then starting from his trance, he gazed no more,
But straightway thro' the matted myrtles broke,
And sped across the silken-swarded vales
Into the city, where he panting spoke
The wondrous story in the general ear.

XXIII.

It is not happiness that moves the Muse ;
And I thus long am silent : when the day
Goes heavily and thou art far away,
Then my love's motion, answering to its dues,
No more, methinks, its tribute will refuse ;
And I in grateful verse may half express
The power and passion of my tenderness,
And what I have enjoyed, and what I lose.
Be not impatient, therefore, nor misdoubt
My heart because 'tis silent ; there ascends
At morn and even to the Throne above
A smoke of thankfulness for thy dear love,
Kindled of such pure bliss, as, measured out
For all such lack, makes more than best amends !

XXIV.

'Tis almost bitter to behold thee so,
Home of my Childhood ! though we disunite
So gently, and no strange and sudden spite
Part our close loves with one vindictive blow.
'Tis lessening of our sorrow to foreknow ;
Yet the distrustful heart in parting fears
Lest the rank weeds, foul crop of later years,
Thy young-green recollections overgrow.
'Twere never thus while yet we might behold
The garden from whose turf we plucked our flowers,
The nursery and the toys which once were ours.
Ah well ! we must be used, as we grow old,
To see our by-gone household seats grown cold,
And blossoms dearer yet perished from our sweet
 bowers.

XXV. ON A VIOLET

FLOATING IN A GLASS OF WATER.

BLEST be this lakelet and its tiny Isle !
A land cœrulean, by a crystal tide
Of fairest water clipped on every side ;
Both purest,—whose mixed fragrance doth beguile
The hot and weary spirit, like the smile
Of childhood, velvet-cheeked and easy-eyed,
Whose heart supports sweet Love, upon a tide
As pure as this, as fair and sweet an isle :
O that the odour fused and blended so
Of this fresh water, and this sweetest flower
That coins heaven's air to beauty in the mint
Of its own Spirit, gay and innocent,
Might never be forgotten ! thence would flow
Profit and joy for many a silent hour.

XXVI.

LET Fancy make her journey as she wills ;
Yea, if she will, spread out umbrageous wings
Beneath the sun, until all earthly things,—
Green grass, and spiry hedgerows and quick rills,—
Are smit with sadness, and a blank damp fills
The hollow of the blue and breathing sky.
In mood as wild the other morning I
Traversed with comrades twain the Charnwood Hills.
One with transparent eyes and beaming face
Looked into mine a balmy look of bliss
That made me hope :—the other held away
His hoary beard as angered mortals may ;
Who were they did me such offence and grace ?
The Angel Michael That, the Patriarch Joseph This.

XXVII.

“ THE heart is full of flowers, who says therein
Are hidden snakes that heave the treacherous crest,
And vermin whose corruption scales the best
With ministry less noted ?” Thus we win
Faint courage to behold the soul within,
From question asked by Wonder of Self-love ;
Thus boldly doth a tiptoe Fear reprove
The mention of the inhabitative sin.
Come, Love and Wonder, work your work ! unbar
The gates, proud warder ! Wonder, gaze thy fill,
And grow by gazing ! come, thou pallid Fear,
And wrapt in Truth’s serener atmosphere,
Stand in thine own dimensions ; like a star
In mist, thou now art large or less at will.

XXVIII.

WRITTEN ON THE 20th JUNE, 1837 ; THE DAY ON
WHICH KING WILLIAM IV. DIED.

THE meanest word uttered on such a day
Will have and keep its value. William dies
To-day : no magic in the sentence lies ;
Yet will it have an everlasting sway,
Which all the rebel Years must yet obey ;
Which all the irrespective Centuries,
That hurry on the good, and great, and wise,
Cannot annihilate and do away :
For Time, a tender Father, marks his Hours
As fondly as a maiden her few flowers,
And doth to every little one allow
This privilege ; to die but not decay,
Being embalmed in every casual Now ;
And this not he, their Parent, can gainsay.

XXIX. CONTINUED.

THERE may be other lessons, and there are ;
AND others to deliver them : for me
BE it enough to cull for Memory
THE garland she will not disdain to wear :
LET these dim hawthorn hedges, fallow-fair,
FLING down the years their present sleepy scent ;
LET the rich clouds that hang this firmament
GROW not by time more light, nor heavier ;
THE hot moist clover with as sweet a breath
(ALMOST too sweet) creep up ; the lagging bells,
WITH their wild fallings and their passionate swells,
STRUGGLE athwart the lazy atmosphere
AS now ; if at another royal death
AGAIN I walk with Avon rippling near.

XXX.

BRAVE Boy, when thy young heart is fully grown,
And courage, firmness, love, are budded out
Into their summer richness, thou wilt own
An heirdom such as few of us have known ;
In our unsteady selves so tossed about,
That we may hardly chide the stormy world
For its unkindly harbourage ; but thou
Wilt not be thus, when that which in thee now
Lies hid, like beauty in the unquickened rose,
Into its later glory is unfurled :
Its opening I may see ; but ere its close
Leave my old age delightless unto me,
May some sharp wind uproot the tottering tree,
And let me sleep where none his sorrow knows.

XXXI.

O YES, one object may be centred purely
In the young spirit's most luxurious stir ;
She shall be honoured, loved, and served more surely
For the rude riot that surroundeth her !
The Day behind the clouds lies blue and calm,
And slyly laughing as she sits alone,
Counts light indeed earth's few faint airs of balm,
Heaven's golden sunshine being all her own ;
The maiden stars preserve their peaceful way,
Albeit the winds with blast, and cry, and clangour,
Tease their fair orbs ; half in too rough a play,
And half in sallies of a frolic anger ;
The silver moon unfretted doth pursue
Her fancies, if the sky be black or blue.

XXXII.

THY walls, old Home, are bare ; but marks remain
Where hung the painter's glories. There, for years
Jephtha's meek Daughter, steeped in silent tears,
Knelt midst the gloomy torches ; there again
Venetia's palace, and her spousal main
In sunset's brazen splendour gleamed serene ;
There misty morning on a pastoral scene
Asked homage to the genius of Lorraine.
Here Tivoli far off hung dim, while nearer
Upon a meadow plot three naked Boys
Danced gleesomely, none fairer and none dearer
Unto the Mother, who looked on in love ;
There Rome's proud temple in translucent skies
Sheathed its tall spires ; the moon hung high above.

XXXIII.

LADY, if birds to two divided lands
Be native, as the sun shines there or here,
So, as thy home, a loving atmosphere,
Ranges, mayst thou too range, and yet the bands
Of home be round thee, like a mother's hands
'Twined round her child, a gleeful prisoner ;
Thus now are England's homelier shores as dear
To thee as once were Taio's golden sands ;
And thou dost not despise for fiery passion,
The hurried harvest of a glowing clime,
Old England's homage of a calmer fashion :
Remembering well that flowers which slowest form,
And are of quieter dye, although as warm,
Lose less their tints, and bloom a longer time.

XXXIV. TO THE POET WORDSWORTH. (14)

I HAVE beheld thee, loved and honoured Name,
A name no longer, but a shape of life
With human thoughts, loves, hopes, and interests
 rife,
No white Ideal crowned with burning fame,
But one in whom our nature's lowest claim
Fights with her highest in serenest strife;
A daughter's sire, the husband of a wife;
Thro' all thy fancy's moods a man the same :
A man with hoary hair, a good old man,
In calmness, glory, majesty, and purity,
Most like a rounded silver moon serene,
Whose age is not a ghostly pale Has-been,
But the compactest image of maturity,
The perfect apex of Heaven's perfect plan.

XXXV. TO THE SAME.

WORDSWORTH ! great spirit ! loveliest of our Time,
And of all England's Bards, save One, the greatest,
Well with thine outward manliness thou matest
The figure of thy soul, serene, sublime :
And, hearing thee, I felt as in that clime
Where Gods with mortals mingled ;—Bacchus wise,
Minerva with grave port and stately eyes,
Blithe Venus, daughter of sweet Fancy's prime.
But power more gracious dwelt with thee than
 theirs,
And influence to a human heart more dear,
Since thou didst shew us what pure glory can
Be won, if worked for, by a mortal man,
Whose hopes and cares are human hopes and cares,
Whose loves and griefs are earth's, whose dwelling
 here.

XXXVI.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE SAME POET ;
IN THE COMBINATION-ROOM OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

WHERE mountain turf, the purest and the greenest,
Lays to the barren rocks a tender breast,
The painter's art hath set thee, last and best
Of England's quire of bards, that, not the meanest.
Rightly on earth, divine old man, thou leanest,
Still less divine than earthly, and more blest
In that admixture of earth's loftiest
Affections with the upper sky's serenest,
Than if far off on cloudy wings upborne
Among the splendid stars thy lonely way,
Hidden or seen, at noon, and eve, and morn
Were meted out, a kingly path forlorn ;
And how much dearer in thy humble sway
To us who feel, and love, and laugh, and mourn !

XXXVII. TO AMY ROBSART,

AS DEPICTED BY SIR W. SCOTT IN HIS NOVEL OF
"KENILWORTH."

SWEET flower, that from a pleasant rustic shade,
And careful tendance of familiar eyes,
Wert too soon plucked to be the guarded prize
Of one whose love a loftier plant betrayed—
Loftier, not lovelier ;—O ill-fated maid,
Whose story in the hearer's bosom lies,
A well of tears, which every day supplies
With new remembrance day by day displayed,
If Fame were aught, and sad commemoration
More than a tearful light upon the air,
Thou wert repaid by that sublime oblation,
Unto thine honour, lady good and fair,
Offered by genius singly, while mankind
Watching the sacrifice, approved behind.

XXXVIII.

Six moons ago why did I so rejoice,
That one less bond now tied me down to earth,
If thou so busy be, in grief and mirth,
With a new cord thrice-stranded, knotted thrice,
To hold me still an exile from the skies ?
Is it not so ?—or is the love of thee
A ladder to lead thither ?—let it be !
A rainbow path of milky light it lies
On my heart's eye ; and heavenly messengers,
New energy the whole dull breast that stirs,
Good thoughts, deep love, and thankfulness extreme,
Tread the ascending arch : on the other side
Comes down delicious Happiness tender-eyed,
Calm as a picture, calm remembered in a dream.

XXXIX.

THE wild-winged Birds when one the other calleth
Have answer forth from farthest thickets sent,
Though yet no nearer kindred them befalleth
Than heirship of a common element ;
The very Storms that are at war and hate
Punctually respond across the listening hollow,
And echo, who with none is friend or mate,
Sends yet her voice the meanest herd to follow ;
O then since all things, bound in simple kindred,
In hate opposed, or in un-knowledge free,
Yield yet the signal sought, O why is hindered
The mutual service of my love and me ?
Speed, Post! blow, Wind! then distance in disgrace
Will yield his prey again to my embrace.

XL.

THOU sad, and I so joyful, gentle friend !
Yet loosed no link of that which once did tie
Our spirits to one sorrow or one joy ;
There must be wrong betwixt us, though unkenned ;
There must be what we should avoid or mend :
Most on my side, I fear me, whose glad face
Before those tremulous eyelids, and the trace
Of scarce-dropped tears seems almost to offend.
Yet if it were but that a needless fear,
A shadowy trouble, on thy clearer breast
Is flung too strongly, then my sun of joy
Might scare away that phantom of annoy :
Surely it must be so, dear friend, for here
Conscience is ware of no unseemly guest.

XLI.

How would you start if from the breezy sky
Unclouded—not a speck upon the blue—
A voice should fall ; how if the senseless hue
Of some spring rose should quicken to an eye ;
How if a flying bird or tongueless fly
Among green boughs with language should pursue
Your summer walk ; such things have happed to few,
And few such marvellous warning could abye.
Therefore has God who tempers to the weak
Their lesson, mercifully flung to me
My warning in an echo from a Hall,
Builded surpassingly yet near to fall ;
The ruin of a palaced Soul, by freak
Of devils inhabiting riven fearfully.

XLII.

I too possess a home, an isle of peace
Upon a sea of waving corn, a green
Fair plot of quiet garden-ground serene.
Here, summer Twilight's sweet solemnities
Are kept all day by sun-excluding trees :
There, lingering walks and velvet turf between,
Bright flowers hold sunshine all the year I ween,
A happy haunt for Charnwood's neighbouring
breeze ;
But dearer, that in the midst of this fair space
There stands a house where now, (and all life long
I trust) for me by toil or care opprest,
Is nursed the twilight of a kindly rest,
In loving arms imbowered ; and love's bright face
For sunshine, when made chill by pain or wrong.

XLIII.

STAY, cold moon, stay and hear ! for I would tell
To one that hath no tongue to tell again
The mystery within me, thoughts that dwell,
Like haunting ghosts, within the ruined fane
Of my lorn heart and half-disordered brain !
And yet I scruple, in a jealous fear,
Lest other eyes be sharp as mine to trace
Ev'n in thy silent and unfeatured face
The secrets told thee when no soul is near.
Ah, faithless Keeper of a sacred trust,
Thus ev'n thy sympathy were bought too dear.
Sleep, sleep again, in my close heart confined
Dark Secret, sleep !—and let the thriftless wind
Scatter thee with the rest when I am dust.

XLIV. MADINGLEY CHURCHYARD.

THREE sides a grove of yews, a gloomy grove,
Hung with their viscid fruit; the fourth the church,
A fane with yellow walls and scribbled porch,
Where rests the mouldering bier: around, above
The sky, and a still air of peace and love,
Informing the green turf with gentler green
Than lies without; and shadow not unseen,
And coo clear-heard of meditative dove;
'Tis death's serenest garden:—would that here
Many were laid, the blessings of whose graves
Is lost to me—thou chiefly, Mother blest,
Mother, own mother! whose unbroken rest
Is taken where the city's noisy waves
Roll loudly, and the busy tongue chafes near.

XLV.

Am I or am I not what I would be ?
Have I within me of that golden ore
Which poets, using from the time of yore,
Have yet left some unspent. Alas for me,
Bemazed in so great perplexity !
Alas for one that longs but cannot crop,
Standing among green trees with fruit o'er-
weighted ;
Alas for one athirst, whose heat no drop
Of the encircling waters may assuage ;
A young heart crusted with the shell of age ;
Enjoyment lost, yet longing unabated,
A soul that fain would speak, yet hath no tongue,
Like any desolate thing, a harp unstrung,
A tree that bears no fruit, a dove unmated !

XLVI.

O ! 'tis like evening's soft and sad recalling
Of morning's freshness thus to think of thee ;
And nourishing dews upon my heart are falling,
That have been late so scant and were so free :
Then too they rested longer, for the tree
Of my green love o'ershadowed them. No more,
No more that lusty desert-plant runs o'er
With the deep verdure of its greenery :
Buds thereupon were shaped, and leaves were
 whitening
Into a sheet of virgin flower—'tis o'er !
Gathered the sudden cloud, and fell the lightning,
And the scathed trunk that is a tree no more
Now strikes unseen a deep and deepening root,
And yet may never bear blossom or fruit,
Nor hold its head aloft, and spread, and soar !

XLVII.

SWEET Lady, thou hast changed thy smiles to
frowning,
Yet canst thou never change my love to hate,
But it must still, like living ivy crowning
A broken pillar, round the desolate
Remembrance of thy by-gone years of smiling,
Bloom with a fond affection self-sustained ;
With cheerful light the interval beguiling
Till thine old love be once again regained,
Or, the grey memory being wholly perished,
By which the creeper's scanty life was fed,
The shrunken withes round that they vainly
cherished
Upon the dust in mournful faith be spread ;
Like those true shrivelled flowers by sextons found
In the dry coffins of a chalky ground.

XLVIII.

I KNOW my love is set about my brow,
A band of living light ; a glorious crown,
More bright than diamonded cirques that throw
Their mocking brilliance round the fretted brow
Of monarchs with their jewelled pride weighed down.
I feel it there though eye of man see nought
Save the soft lustre of a settled peace,
And smiles from every motion of my thought
Breaking, like twinkles on the lulled mid-seas,
As soft, as sweet, and with as sure succession !
And thus in hope's strong armour cased I seize
An easy conqueror, on the rosy hours,
And, looking ever down my path of flowers,
Pace gently towards my bower of rest—possession.

XLIX. ON RECEIVING GOOD NEWS

OF A FRIEND IN INDIA.

GLAD tidings of the plant so fair, so dear !
The sweet transplanted Tree whose leaves grew faint,
And pale, and sick, as with a mortal taint,
In the first breath of that strange atmosphere.
No matter, 'tis revived, and with a clear
Green flush, as 'twere of spring, is dyed anew.
Now blessing be on every wind that blew
Upon the bearer of this welcome cheer ;
Methinks I see the gallant Ship draw near :
Dancing with joy, upon her path she comes,
And sensible pleasure seems to steep her sails,
And creep among her shrouds, like some soft gale's
Mild stir, as though the inanimate Frame could hear
The welcome flung her from a hundred homes !

L.

LADY, there are sweet plants of loveliest leaves,
On which, the garden's boast, still softly settles
Amid their luxury of doubling petals
And colours as the colours of spring eves,
An odour of the fields, a free wild scent ;
So with thy tutored elegance is blent,
Sweet lady, a home-grace that wins us more
Than tresses gathered up and rolling o'er,
Or hand's pure shape, or eye's dark languishment.
So in thy boudoir's artful shade it were,
As we beheld thee in the open air,
Beneath a roof of flowery branches bent ;
Or at a well, or by a cottage wall,
Or any how most pure and natural.

LI.

THERE are some trees (who knows not such a tree ?)
Which standing in a garden full and fair
Make themselves lonely, so supreme they are ;
So gorgeous in their dyes, their scent so free ;
So strong yet delicate in their tracery,
And so surpassing rich the fruits they bear.
O friend ! if I such lofty name may share,
Such among other men thou seem'st to be,
The humblest nestler in the breast of heaven,
The freest dallier with the earth-born breeze,
Bearing the soul's best fruit, the mind's best flowers
To Him who planted thee ; so in all hours
And places, highest place to thee is given
Unconsciously. May such pure fame increase !

LII.

THE most distasteful glooms that ever leant
Upon the face of dimpling pool, or brook
Whose natural aspect is a joyous look,
As childhood's merriest, free from discontent,
And ease best imaged by a bow unbent,
Were less to blame for marring earth's delight
Than this untimely cloud, whose sullen spite
Dashes thy soft eye's wonted merriment.
• Yet if it come lest boyhood's sun should fling
Upon the tender spring serene and pure
Of home affections ever insecure,
An eye in too unguarded fire arrayed,
Then is it welcome as the tree whose shade
Holds cool and constant waters in the spring.

LIII.

MY friend, a space, one short year's space ago,
We two together paced the green arcades
Of Trinity, fair mother, while the shades
Gathered among the boughs, and to and fro
Athwart them, as we walked, the rosy glow
Of eve's sweet star pursued a courteous race,
Quicker or slower as the wilful pace
Of our mute idleness was quick or slow.
Now think how much a single busy year
Hath laid on our young shoulders!—upon thine
The weight of a dear wife, and Christ's dear cross,
And many souls for final gain or loss;
—A burden not so heavy, although near,
Two bright boys' care, and Happiness, on mine.

LIV.

BENIGNANT lady, if that one so young
May bless thee for the beauty of thy brow,
And not presume, I, lady, bless thee now ;
They fabled that the wild bees came and hung
On Plato's lip ;—if any fanciful tongue
Should say that creatures which no mortals know,
Creatures all white with wings as soft as snow,
Came down from heaven and on thy forehead clung,
I could believe it, of such heavenly mould
Is the calm there, and such a kindly calm
Mantles thy quiet eyes, quiet not cold ;
And such a meditative grace dwells ever
On thee, as on a plant by some still river
Kissed but not ruffled by sweet airs of balm.

LV. WRITTEN AFTER READING A BOOK OF
EASTERN TRAVELS.

To us encaged in home and loving faces,
How pleasant to believe we bend our way,
Lone travellers at morn and eve of day,
Where the sweet desert shews his vernal graces,
Or where the Euphrates' palm-lined wave embraces
Babel's heaped ruins, faithful in decay ;
Or in the Holy Land's most holy places
Earn the light scallop-shell, as I to day.
Thanks to thee, Traveller, brave and joyous-hearted!
Thanks to the constant soul that held its own
Among those mournful regions !—But for me,
A sudden chill of heart creeps through my glee,
Though but to hear of these bright lights departed,
Those glories of my childhood overthrown.

MISCELLANEOUS.

PART THE THIRD.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

PART THE THIRD.

I. THE GIPSY BEGGAR.

THEY gave him nought ; he turned away
With such a sufferance as is bred
From careless usage day by day ;
'Twas wisdom in an humble way
Both of the heart and head.

I followed on that lordly train ;
Their laugh yet rang upon the ear
Just round an elbow of the lane ;
And me the gipsy asked again
For alms, when I drew near.

For alms—he had no home, he said,
And (changed the beggar's tale before)
No wife nor children ; all were dead,
He was alone on earth, he said,
And stricken with a sore.

'Twas cunningly devised to move
 My heart, however he might guess ;
And more his seeming want of love
The tender depths of pity clove,
 Than deeper shared distress.

His was an ancient Roman's face,
 So statue-like in shape, and yet
So viperous in eye, the grace
Of that calm outline keen gave place
 To its continual fret.

It glanced ten times while yet he spoke,
 Ten separate darts it made or more,
On me—upon his tattered cloak—
Upon an imp, that wildly broke
 From out a hovel door.

I looked upon the boy and him,
 'Twas clear to me they were akin ;
Only the younger was less grim
To see, his cheek more dewy-dim,
 And of a finer skin.

But in the lips and lofty brows
 'Twas evident that they were one,
And in the eye, its sudden close
And quick expansion ; now who knows
 But they are sire and son ?

So thought I to myself, and fast
My charity was running down ;
But yet when one quick glance was past,
No look upon the child he cast,
No smile ; nor yet a frown.

So I gave credence, as seemed meet,
To that sad tale of loveless woe,
For coldest heart that ever beat
Was never schooled to such deceit
As this, said I, I know.

The imp went dancing down the lane,
And never saw us standing there,
When suddenly he fell ; amain
A horrid cry—a cry of pain,
Rang shrilly on the air !

'Twas nature's dart, aimed at the heart,
Which had forsworn her gentle sway :
It pierced—away the father ran ;
Three leaps had borne the hasty man
To where the urchin lay.

He took him up, he laid his cheek
To his ; the lovely boy's was pale :
He kissed him as a mother meek
Kisses her child, but doth not speak
For fear his slumbers fail.

Moist dew was in his viperous eyes
That were so horny bright before :
To soothe the boy with play he tries ;
He mimics playfully his cries,
Until the child forbore.

Then up to me—he saw me smile—
He led the boy so fair and young ;
“ Five more I have, sir,”—I, meanwhile,
For the heart’s faith, forgave the guile,
That was but of the tongue.

II. INSCRIPTION FOR AN ARBOUR.

SING songs and be right merry in this bower !
So wills the genius of the place, and hour,
Be it mid-day, or eve, or noon, or night,
For hearty Nature wars not with delight.
So be thou merry with thy love or friend,
If but thy soul be clean thou’lt not offend.

III.

'Tis six o'clock—the sun is low,
The kindled grass is all a-glow,
A living emerald sea ;
The fields are dewy ; tempt them not
My tender friend ! my garden plot
Is dry, come walk with me !

I'll shew you where my darlings grow,
My pets, a dear memorial shew
Of friends far off or near,
Whose thoughts with love's economy,
Keep yet one little space for me,
Whether abroad or here.

Mark yon lithe creeper ! linked, and light,
Up Cintra's garden walls so white,
'Twas used of old to climb,
Or fling an odour scarce of earth,
Where Lisbon's dames, with love and mirth,
Beguile the summer time.

This was a neighbour then thereto,
Where Taio's waves were fair to view,
And lemon groves to smell ;

And large dark eyes its beauty quaffed,
And sweet lips sang, and light hearts laughed
O'er its long buds as well.

Now mark yon group of marigold,
A thousand bunchy buds unrolled !
A thousand orbs of fire !
Bright as the girdle of the skies,
And many in their changeful dyes
As Heaven's own various quire !

They and that larkspur fair and light,
Yon hollyhock as grand as Night,
Yon agile climbing pea,
Beside the ruined convent-wall
Once saw their faces, one and all,
Deep in the Laacher See.

Now see this flower, so proud and tall ;
I name the flower, my cardinal,
Because its ancient home
Was where upon his measured walks
The red-robed priest might brush its stalks,—
The Vatican at Rome.

Now see another favoured guest ;
Yon balsam, with the palmy crest,
A pyramid of bells,
As scarlet as a baby's lips
Asleep:—where white Byzantium clips
The azure wave, it dwells.

And yet another pair I call,
The last, the dearest of them all,
 Though worthless to the florist,
This foxglove from a lofty hill,
This mouse-ear, from a mossy rill,
 In thee, dear Charnwood Forest !

MISCELLANEOUS.

PART THE THIRD.

And have no change of beauty, but are bright
Steadfast with no reflux and no endeavour;
Thou knowest that as these stand still to thee
In fulness, so stands still my love to me
With one clear presence, rounding day and night.

V. COLIN CLOUT IN WARWICKSHIRE.

I LOVE my humble happiness ;
No sweeter scent doth follow
The lily on the height, I guess,
Than the lily in the hollow ;
I love the quiet-flowing eves,
The sober glow of morning,
The calm to every hour that cleaves,
Securing and adorning.

The silent fields that lie so still,
And nourish their sweet grasses ;
The wind that pass when pass it will,
You scarce can tell it passes :
The flowers that have no care beyond
Their own serene decorum ;
The brooks, of hanging banks so fond,
And hawthorn boughs bent o'er 'em ;

The violets' haunts where modest buds
Among brown oak-leaves tremble ;
The grassy places in the woods
Where the primroses assemble ;
The hedgerow where the cowslip makes
Its music ; and the meadow

Where the ladysmock, small banneret, shakes
Its shreds of lilac shadow ;

The river sides with waters cool
By day and night acquainted ;
The wild rose cup so beautiful
So delicately scented ;
The woodbine, trump of morn and night,
The Mayblob's golden tabour ;
The speedwell with its moral bright
Of the cheeriness of labour ;

All these, my humble stock of joys,
I love, and am contented :
The heart must be so that employs
But half the blessings lent it ;
And if to each adds Thought the witch
Some bygone scene to feed on,
In Warwickshire am I as rich
As Adam was in Eden.

VI.

LIKE young Vertumnus he stands there,
The primrose crown is in his hair ;
The pure spring blush upon his face,
In every limb a primal grace ;
And gentle boyish feelings teach
His dimpling lips a vernal speech.
—What had the power of old that he,
My Love, hath not more plenteously ?

All gentle feelings try their art,
And coax his dimpling lips apart ;
What saith he ? loving words, be sure,
The coinage of a heart as pure
As ever looked through boyish eyes
Ere Passion's mists began to rise.
—This is what lacked that Godhead blest
And my Love hath so manifest.

VII. GRACE CAREWE.

THE passing bell is scarcely down ;
And though the hand is cold,
About the heart no more at strife,
Some remnants of the warmth of life
Their conquered fortress hold.

Oh ! woeworn heart ! 'tis rest to thee,
If death be rest to any ;
So wearisome hath been thy way,
So bright a sunset crowned thy day,
Thy griefs, thy hopes so many !

It might seem scarcely time to tell,
Beside thy yet warm ashes,
How red and ripe those lips have been,
How bright the eye that glanced between
Those long, soft, silken lashes ;

And more unfitting still to read
The tale of crime and sorrow,
Beside the bed whereon she lay,
And changed our weeping for to-day,
To hoping for to-morrow.

And so it were if wisdom's steps
For loitering search would tarry ;
But human hours will wait for none,
And we must gather as we run
The wealth which we would carry.

“ O pride of beauty too secure !
O light of love misleading !
O careless heart in caution's spite
To passion's idle words, the right
Of wedded vows conceding !”

O'er many a fall those words I've said
In tears I could not master,
But never with a soul so stirred
As when the startling tale I heard
Of Grace Carewe's disaster !

Most deeply was I grieved thereat,
For I had always thought her
In mind as lovely as in face ;
In truth I deemed her knightly race
Had never prouder daughter.

Well, well,—'twas otherwise :—her shame
In common mouths was spoken,
Yet ever as around it went
With pity and with wonderment,
And oft with tears 'twas broken.

And now a year had worn away
Our anger at her failing :
The troubled water had run clear ;
And never met her name our ear
But answered with bewailing.

Her lovely face, her open hand,
The charm that lay upon her
Ere yet she left her maiden ways,
Her own respect and our fond praise
To tarry with dishonour ;

All came back sweeter to our thoughts :
As light a moment shaded
Shews yet more brilliant when unmasked ;
So we remembered her, nor asked
How such resplendence faded.

Thus was it, when, one sabbath day,
When summer's heat lay heavy
On man, and beast, and cornfields white
That glimmered with a restless light,
And dark still woodlands leavy,

The sexton of our village church
Unlocked the doors at dawning,
To let the breezes fill the place
With pleasant scents and (16) airs of grace,
Kissed from the lips of morning.

It is an old and seemly fane,
Yet more from time's soft gracing,
Than pillars ranked in stately files,
And shadowy length of lofty aisles,
And arches interlacing.

And its chief charm is in the thought
Of prayers there offered weekly,
And penitent sobs in its low pews,
And foreheads damp with clammy dew
Of them who mourn less meekly.

Yet there were many quaint old tombs
To brave Carewes erected ;
And later carvings less uncouth,
Whose marble yet was fair and smooth,
In many a group collected.

The fairest of that seemly crowd,
To Grace's mother given,
Bore carven on a sable base
A snowy dove, whose native place
Was in the heights of heaven.

There round the pillar that upheld
That tribute to the sainted,
Lay Grace, her child,—with sin no more
But grief and sorrows running o'er,
Sin's wages, well acquainted.

The father saw her as the latch
Of his tall pew he lifted ;
A proud old man, yet not the less
With human wish to love and bless,
And human pity gifted.

The poor old man—I see him yet,
The burden in his bosom ;
I half believe the faded flower
Was dearer than the brightest hour
Of the untainted blossom :

They brought her home—they laid her here,
That body weak and wasting,
Yet *that*,—God wounds and God makes whole—
That took an everlasting soul
To glory everlasting !

VIII.

BELIEVE not 'tis an influence lost
If yet to me no power be given,
To tell of that blessed sight that crossed
My senses yester-even.

We may not all at once declare
What we have felt in blessed mood,
When the spirit of the breathing air
Runs through us, like our blood.

A finger on our lips is laid,
Which wishes are too weak to move,—
A spell that will not be gainsaid,
The voicelessness of love.

A Stillness which is not Content
But Striving, such as may be guessed
Is a dumb thing's disquietment,—
A restlessness in rest.

—One that a scattered last-night's dream
At morn would vainly strive to string,
May weave the whole, upon the stream
Of mid-day idly balancing ;

And I to-morrow in a song
May speak those boisterous hopes and joys,
Which yester-eve were leaping, strong
As the merry blood that leaps along
The veins of lusty boys.

IX. THE CLEARING OF THE RAIN.

THE stars are hanging, one by one,
In rows along the embowed sky ;
And the great moon stilly looketh on,
And the sweet wind runneth by.

The rain all day in large long drops
Fell, never ceasing ;—now the wind
Hath dried the tall acacia tops,
And the beechen boughs behind,

But the chesnut leaf is heavy still,
And the clover and the beaded corn ;
And merrily o'er the whirling mill
Will the swollen brook be borne.

Come forth, my sister, come and share
The boon of joy to nature given,
The freshness of the lightened air,
And the mirth of the naked heaven !

X.

AWAKE, sweet nightingale, awake and sing !
For I am listening,
And I can read thy meaning melody,
(By my own love-taught heart so gifted,)
Or if it trembling creep among the boughs,
Low as a boy's first vows ;
Or if in tumult long and loud 'tis lifted
Up to the blue roof of the summer sky.

Sing, bashful bird,—sing up !—be bold, and throw
The balmy overflow
Of thy full heart along the heedless wood :
The trunks can never tell thy pain,
And may-be it may comfort some lorn lad,
Half sorrowful, half glad,
Who at a tree-foot thinketh o'er again
The unmastered mystery of his racing blood.

Oh ! it is comfort at grey eventide,
Set by the Loved One's side,
To list, while all that from our human tongue,
We could not strike with our best skill,

Is poured into our ears from nature's lyre ;
Filling our high desire
With notes, as fiery as our headlong will,
Yet softly, as our natural reverence, sung !

Yes ! bring thy love beneath the starry sky,
Ere yet the eyes be dry
From the first knitting of two hearts in one ;
And care not that *thy* lips are mute ;
So the sweet bird, love's best interpreter,
Be there to offer her
The gratulations of his untired lute,
Thanks, love, hope, fear, in rapturous unison !

XI. MOTHER'S LOVE.

HE sang so wildly did the Boy,
That you could never tell,
If 'twas a madman's voice you heard,
Or if the spirit of a bird
Within his heart did dwell.
A bird that dallies with his voice
Among the matted branches ;
Or on the free blue air his note
To pierce, and fall, and rise, and float,
With bolder utterance launches ;
None ever was so sweet as he,
The boy that wildly sang to me,
Though toilsome was the way and long,
He led me not to lose the song.

But when again we stood below
The unhidden sky, his feet
Grew slacker, and his note more slow,
But more than doubly sweet.
He led me then a little way
Athwart the barren moor,
And then he stayed and bade me stay
Beside a cottage door ;

I could have stayed of mine own will,
In truth, my eye and heart to fill
With the sweet sight which I saw there,
At the dwelling of the cottager.

A little in the doorway sitting,
The mother plied her busy knitting,
And her cheek so softly smiled,
You might be sure, although her gaze
Was on the meshes of the lace,
Yet her thoughts were with her child.
But when the boy had heard her voice,
As o'er her work she did rejoice,
His became silent altogether,
And slily creeping by the wall,
He seized a single plume, let fall
By some wild bird of longest feather ;
And all a-tremble with his freak,
He touched her lightly on the cheek.

O what a loveliness her eyes
Gather in that one moment's space,
While peeping round the post she spies,
Her darling's laughing face !
O mother's love is glorifying,
On the cheek like sunset lying ;
In the eyes a moistened light,
Softer than the moon at night !

XII. VERSES FOR A COMMON CASE.

• YES, Alice, there was wont to be
 A trouble on thy brow,
And grief and pain 'twas then to me,
 But not such pain as now :
I deemed the shadow was but thrown
 From transient unrest ;
I knew not that it was thine own,
 And born within thy breast.

I knew not then that thou hadst been
 To other than to me,
As sunset is unto the green
 As moonlight to the sea,
A light to lighten what was sad,
 To deepen what was fair,
A lamp of comfort, which has had
 Its presence every where.

I looked that still it should be so,
 That rapture and that grief
Should gain from thee a fresher glow,
 Or livelier relief :

I thought that death, when death should come,
Would lighter seem to me,
Since, after death, the eternal tomb
Would still be shared with thee.

'Tis past away, that hope so bright,
That flower whose glorious hue
Clad the bare future with a light
As lovely as untrue ;
'Tis scattered, like a broken wave ;
And I must now look on
To sorrow, sickness, and the grave,
Past and possessed alone.

Think, Alice, once a little word,
A momentary breath,
Had left untied the triple cord
Which binds us now till death ;
The certain smile of tearless eyes,
Upon our paths had set :
And spared our past of stifled sighs,
Our future of regret.

Now, Alice, now we live or die,
United though alone ;
In all the rest apart, brought nigh
In this, our little One !
Here is the cord that will not break,
The bond we cannot sever,
The tie so strong, that it shall make
Our fates the same for ever.

Yet can I blame the tongue too slow
Thy secret love to tell,
When I hang back and linger so
O'er that one word 'farewell !'
'Tis uttered !—Alice, once most dear,
Still too dear to my heart,
I have performed my duty here,
And, Alice, we must part.

Go, take the child, our common child,
I yield him with the rest ;
Thou hast his little heart beguiled,
He loves his mother best :
I know if I have ever won
Some share of love from thee,
'Twas as *his father*—as *thy son*,
The child is dear to me.

Take him, for kind words kindly said,
And looks all words above ;
For years of wifely duty paid
To one thou didst not love :
Thine unwise choice thou didst fulfil
Most nobly, though 'twas hard ;
And it is fitting thou should'st still
Bear with thee thy reward.

Whate'er thy fate, may He on high,
Whose aid alone is sure,
Help thee the good to profit by,
The evil to endure.

And now farewell!—turn not away,
Though cold the word may be,
Thou dost not know how I will pray
For my own child and thee.

I go unto my usual home,
The hearth I used to praise;
But thou hast chilled the pleasant room,
And dulled the cheerful blaze;
Well, well, I blame thee not for this,
Reproach were worse than vain,
Enough! as mine the bygone bliss,
• Be mine the present pain!

XIII. THE FOURTH BELL.

AGAIN ! Again ! Another bell is sounding !
My heart is hardened, yet I hear it pass,
Like thunder peals from crag to crag rebounding,
Or echoes ringing down a sea of glass :
My heart is hardened, yet I cry, ' Alas !'
And hurrying sobs choke up my burning throat ;
And leaden pain, a heavy icy mass,
Lies on my heart ; and like an empty boat
My reason sways about on feeling's deeps afloat.

Again ! Again ! A fourth ! and if the saddest,
No wonder ; he it tolls for was the first ;
His cheek the softest, and his eye the gladdest,
His warning shortest, and his passage worst.
The earliest love my childish bosom nursed
Is cut away from earth, a perished flower ;
Rathe bud, which just as summer's glory burst
Upon it, by the pitiless, pelting shower
Is cheated of its day before the noontide hour. (17)

The crown of triple glory from his head
Hath suddenly fallen ; Beauty, Joy, and Youth,
Untwined, lie by him as he lieth dead.
His neck's Adornment, Honour, Love, and
Truth,

Lie all unlinked on's other side in sooth.
No other head will they so fairly fit,
Wrought in such nice proportion, more the ruth!
So with his lost perfections infinite
About him, Love and Grief will lay him in his pit.

They have been young whom I bewailed ere-
while,
My threefold embassy to highest heaven :
They have been young ; but with sedater smile
They laughed, and on their foreheads were
engraven
Thoughts deeper, passions calmer ; be forgiven
The fondness if I yet loved thee the best,
With thy quick spirit, and the bond unriven
Of love and gaiety within thy breast,
Besides, thou wert the first, so must I love thee best.

Wouldst thou remind me of the grassy bank,
Where we two played in childhood's sunny air ?
Of each long lesson and each harmless prank
We shared in turn ? An useless toil it were,
For I forget them not, but with close care
Have told them to myself for years and years,
Deeming I hoarded seed of converse rare
When we should meet again—I hoarded tears—
Regret without its hopes, and love without its fears.

Come back, old Sorrow, served by pleasant Hope !
Come back, old Love, with Fear beside thee set,

Fear that day's dome or midnight's starry cope
Should fall ; or thou thy dearest heart forget.
O give me doubt, and hope, and terror yet !
Give me the sun and shade ;—the pleasant rack
Of fitting clouds that vary and not fret !
O call the dim, fair, flequered azure back,
And spare me this dire ceil of pure crystalline black !

O Earth ! come help me with thy shaded face
To mourn him ! Sky, assist me with thy dew !
Lo ! Joy is throned in every sunny place,
On this green grass, on yon resplendent blue ;
And Autumn's loveliest day comes forth to view.
O Earth and Nature ! were the power but mine
To quench your glories, I the deed could do,
To lose the torture of yon sunny shine,
And that bright sky I see, not *feel*, to be divine.

Beauty is gone, and yet thou never mournest ;
And Youth is gone, and thou art glad as ever :
And death is here, and thou again returnest,
With nodding trees and gaily-sparkling river :
A sylvan Huntress with her glancing quiver,
With horn and hound unto the green wood flying,
So blithe as thou, thou careless Earth, was never.
And yet before thy face the corse is lying,
Where life and love are dead, and beauty's self is
dying.

O Earth, hard-hearted ! with how vain a yearning

The ancients called thee Mother ! Heart of Pride,
Where is thy darkened green, thy seemly mourn-
ing

For him who in his loveliness hath died,
For him, the fairest son that Morning eyed,
Or Night desired with longing heart to see ?
Earth ! Earth ! the lesson will not pass aside :
Our mother thou art not, and wilt not be,
Nor own the sons of God a filial love to thee !

XIV.

IN a dark hut she lay, whose poverty
Shewed strangely by the silken garments spread
About her couch, the couch itself so poor.
They were the garments of her former pride,
Cherished, as linking her with other days,
Even in her wretchedness ; and now brought forth
To lie upon her bed, for the mere warmth
Which they might add to its thin coverlets.

This was a piteous thing to see and know ;
But there was worse than this in that bright eye,
Shining from out her pale and haggard face
With intellectual light, once plainly nursed,
Alas ! as plainly now all but subdued
By the o'erpowering damps 'mid which it burned.
'Twas a sad sight indeed to us who looked
Far back, from this sick bed to olden days,
When in her boudoir's softened shade she sate,
And conquered by her light and glancing wit
The hearts that bent not to her loveliness.
Then the soft sun had scarcely seen her cheek ;
Now all autumnal blasts had license free
Upon her very bed to visit her. Alas !
Alas ! I scarce can think of more than thus,
To say, ' Alas ! ' and then, ' Alas ! ' again.
Yes, so upon her brodered ottomans

She lazily laughed, through the careless days,
Till—

—Yet misdeem not, he she loved was true,
And she, at least, though weak may be within,
And all unpropped by aught more sure than earth,
Had learned no actual vice—oh deem it not.
She was too worldly-proud for worldly shame ;
And when she wedded, 'twas a sacrifice
To one who well deserved it in the eye
Of the more fair to judge, and if *her* world
Shut hence its doors against her, one had deemed
It were for good, not harm. Though he was poor,
And though he grew from out a lowly stock,
Yet was the seed of precious fruit in him !
But the fine essence that was there locked up
Ate daily through its casquet ; and he died,
And all his poet's dreamings died with him.
And with one little child to mock her fate,
Or cheer it, as might be, with its light step
And natural gaiety, his widowed wife
Was left to toil for bread. And she did toil,
With head and hands, writing one while, and then
Varying with humbler labour her short days.
So was it that she cheerfully upbore
Her sorrow and her suffering, by the smile
Of her sweet child repaid and overpaid ;
Till God was pleased to take her merry boy
Unto Himself in heaven. But then she drooped,
And said her light was out, and she must sleep,—
—And she lay down and very soon she slept.

XV.

THIS nipping air, this lowering day,
Where is their power, and what are they ?
Our joy why should we measure
By what we never can controul ;
Methinks the self-acquitted Soul
Will help itself to pleasure.

These fading Trees with wiser spirit
Make their necessity a merit,
And cheerful in decay,
Meet every morn with brighter hues ;
And why should thinking man refuse
To be as wise as they ?

Off with the petted gloom,—the toy
Of wilful boyhood tired of joy !
Why should we pine to roam ?
The heart which hath no inner blight,
Is to itself its own delight,
And makes its bliss at home.

Our nature (could the truth depart ?)
Is glad in a domestic heart,

And with its God for guest,
May ever share a home-made feast ;
Quell then this gloom, or be at least
The weakness unconfest !

XVI.

My own dear love, I call thee so,
And fear not to offend,
For he my love must be, you know,
Whoever is my friend.

For I am one that may not ask
For woman's smiles and tears;
Long past for me that pleasant task
Of younger, calmer years.

I asked when I was yet a boy,
I asked, and asked in vain;
And then died down that tree of joy
Which will not spring again.

And many years I went astray,
With sadness for my guide;
And thought, since that had passed away,
There was no love beside.

And so, though gay and free I seemed,
To those whose hearts were glad,
My hidden sorrow I esteemed
The dearest thing I had.

But then an hour filled heaven above,
And filled the earth with joy ;
Canst guess that hour, my own dear love ?
Thou canst, thou dost, my boy !

XVII.

'Tis like a bathe in waters clear,
With flowers and shady branches near,
To sit, my love, with thee ;
To sit by thee, my love, and hear
Thy voice so fresh and free.

O thou canst fondly move and speak,
And in the dimples of thy cheek
Is hidden fresh delusion ;
Grave looks and smiles so sly and sleek
In winningest confusion.

O yes, my eyes have their desire :
No lily filled with sunset fire
More lovely could you call ;
No wildrose sporting on a briar
In loveliness more natural.

My eyes are glad, but gladder yet
My spirit is, for there is set
On all thou dost and sayest
Affection, a fair coronet,
And gentleness the gayest.

Affection interfused with glee
Is round thee ; as the deeper sea,
Bespeckled from above,
Folds tender shells, so quiet glee
Encompasses my love.

XVIII.

JOYFULLY round the gleaming sky
The dim white vapours roll,
And joyful are my limbs, and I
Am joyful in my soul.

The crocuses are fled again,
And yet we never mourn :
Why should we ? Shall not we remain
Until the flowers return ?

I had a friend who saw the spring
Into the earth descend ;
But autumn's gathering birds took wing,
And I had lost my friend.

As fair was he as any flower,
As delicately gay :
—Dark, dark and sad to me the hour
When he was torn away.

Joy hath strange fancies : one is this,
That it will lend and borrow,
And oft exchange a present bliss
For a departed Sorrow.

XIX. TO A BUTTERFLY.

DEEM'ST thou I would harm thee, Fairest,
That thou fleest down the wind ?
Or is't but the dread thou bearest
To our handed humankind ?
Salutary fear though blind !
Is it thine implanted nature,
Or the judgment of thy mind,
Tell me, tell me, little Creature,
So resplendent ! so unkind !

Thou dost ill if me thou fearest,
I could hurt few living things ;
And of all that flits and flees
In the hedgerow, in the trees,
Surely thou art still the dearest,
For thy glorious horns and wings,
For those folds of tenderest amber,
Eyed with many an orb of red,
Fitting napery for the chamber
Of Titania, or the throne
Of the delicate Oberon !

Come ! nay, fly ! 'tis wisely written
In thy little heart to fly,

Lest the innocent be smitten,
And the guiltless creature die.
Is it so ? Alas, the thirst,
Earliest slaked in Abel's blood,
Burns as fiercely as at first
In our lineal multitude :
Keep thy vantage, come not near,
Thou dost passing well to fear !

XX. INSCRIPTION FOR A VASE OVER-
GROWN WITH VINE.

Do me no harm, kind stranger, nor untwine
A single swathe of my encircling vine ;
So firm as I am thou thyself mayst be,
And Love cling to thee as this Vine to me !

XXI. TO A BROWN LOAF.

WELCOME, brown loaf, of cottage cheer
So pleasantly reminding ;
And pleasures ever dwelling near,
Though oft beyond the finding.

A clean white napkin from a board
As clean as it, descending,
A bowl of milk, and boonly stored
The garden's wealth attending ;

And rosy-cheeked and eager-eyed,
Blithe boys and girls addressing
To Him who doth their cheer provide
The last meal's thankful blessing ;

These are the sights for which to thee,
Brown loaf, I am a debtor ;
So come, when come thou canst, to me,
The oftener 'tis the better !

XXII.

DEAR ———, how could I outgo
My love in words, who love thee so,
That deepest draughts of deepest pleasure,
The merry summer's merriest measure,
The loveliest progress of the year,
Were but a wearisome walk of woe,
A funeral march, so slow, so slow,
If thou shouldst not be near?

My sun art thou, my tender sun,
That opes the sweet buds every one,
Each bud, and bell, and fragrant blossom,
That yields the rifling of its bosom
To the wild spring so fond and free ;
And if the sun should suddenly die,
All earth were not so sad as I
If thou wert gone from me.

I love thee, as the stars above
Affect the dewdrops of the grove,
Which spring in answering pairs together,
One star, one earth, and one in ether ;
And not that brotherhood, though fixt
In Nature's steadfastness, I wis,
Is firmer or so firm as this
Thyself and me betwixt.

XXIII. INSCRIPTION

FOR A PYRAMID PLANTED WITH FLOWERS, THE
TOMB OF A DOG.

Look round these shelves, watch how the hungry bee
Sucks there the earliest wood-anemone ;
Winks the sly violet here ; the primrose there
Lights up its stars upon the shady air ; (18)
Yonder the hooded lily meekly dwells ;
Here the blue hyacinth chimes its massive bells.
Is this fond Nature's sport ? No ! human hands
Reared the green mount ; for Lion's sake it stands :
Be thou as humble, loving, true, as he,
And some may build as sweet a grave for thee.

XXIV.

You bid me sing—what shall I sing ?
Of spring and spring's young roses,
When hope's sweet breeze is on the wing,
And love's sweet bud uncloses ;
Or sing of Autumn's sad delay,
Trees baring, blossoms blighting,
And sleepy clouds before mid-day
The golden sun benighting ?

O be the song, you say, of spring !
'Tis fittest so, my dearest,
When it is I that strike the string,
And thou, sweet love, that hearest ;
'Tis fit because in youth and health
We two sit here together,
Lapped soft and safe in spring-tide's wealth
Of flowers and fairest weather.

So be it !—shall I tell thee how
In all these pleasures round us,
Are mingled snares to overthrow
And glories to confound us ?
How silently into the breast
With these delicious breezes
Are drawn deep heart-aches unconfest,
And treacherous diseases ?

How many a parent's heart hath traced
To such an hour as this is
The loss which still for him lays waste
Our yet unchallenged blisses ;
—A pause to see the sunbeams pass,
The annual leaves renewing ;
An eve spent thus upon the grass,
Such talk as ours pursuing ?

Nay, nay, not so !—with Hope, not Fear,
Be youth and health acquainted,
Nor be the freshness of the year
With such sere wisdom tainted :
If every tree along the ground
The future winds were scenting,
Where were the shady arbours found,
The summer heart contenting ?

Wild works the heart in bondage here,
And shall we then unchain it ;
No watchful doubt, no prudent fear,
To warn it, to restrain it ?
Through rugged roads its path must lie,
And places dark and lonely,
And shall we teach the untravelled eye
To look for sunshine only ?

Nay, doubt not, friend, the genial mood,
A slavish Fear preferring ;
It is not Fear but Gratitude
Keeps best the heart from erring :

With finer care she warns, made strong
By prescient recollections ;
With tenderer foot she treads among
The fanciful affections.

She never wounds with breath austere
The buds of kindly feeling ;
With love she works, from love down here
To upper love appealing :
By memory stretching to a past
Of favours felt already,
And faith that holds the future fast
She keeps the present steady.

A curious eye that asks in all,
Whose grace and glory wears it ?
A heart that listens for the call
And answers when it hears it,
No more she needs to guide us by
Through Earth's most dangerous blisses.
Dear friend, have we that watchful eye,
And such a heart as this is ?

XXV. SONG.

LOVEST thou streams that swiftly flow,
Separating bank from lea ?
Yes, thou lovest them well I know—
Come, oh come then, come with me !

LOVEST thou woods where friendship's flowers
Twine around each mossy tree ?
Lovest thou heather-twisted bowers ?
Come, oh come then, come with me !

LOVEST thou in a lonely dell
Converse with its Deity ?
Yes, I know thou lovest it well,
Come, oh come then, come with me !

BOUND in Friendship's holiest chain,
Dost thou struggle to be free ?
Stretch not—strive not—'tis in vain,
Come, oh come then, come with me !

XXVI.

It may be, must be, that the sky,
Encumbered with a cloudy crust,
Shall cease to shine ; each lovely fly
Lay down its golden panoply
And go again to dust ;
The leaves must first be scorched, then fall ;
The turf turn grey beneath our feet ;
And every flower, and field, and all
The bright expanse of winding meads,
Grow scentless as they now are sweet ;
The sheep and glossy kine must needs
Soon cease to low and bleat ;
The birds to sing this buxom strain ;
Old winter must come back again :
But though it be thus surely willed
By power that is without,
Yet let us with our joy be filled,
And have no fear nor doubt ;
For if the power within be not
Too idle, while the sun is here,
The fruit of this our gladder lot,
Bright thoughts and fancies clear,

Will yet be stored and unconsumed ;
And winter's gloom, thereby illumed,
Seem but a tender sweet half-light,
Not darker than an autumn night.

XXVII.

I AM rated by my neighbours,
I am scoffed at by the wise,
That my fancy so o'erlabours
For such cold ungrateful eyes.

When I tell them all this frowning
Is a pretty April mood,
They, their brows with wrinkles crowning,
Question the similitude.

—But the clouds at times defiling
Thy clear forehead, others see :
What proves this but that thy smiling
Is reserved, sweet love, for me ?

XXVIII.

HE sate, no stiller stands a rock,
And gazed upon an ancient clock ;
He heard its steady even tone,
He watched its finger moving on,
From one to five, from five to ten,
So through its hourly course again.
Thus sate he through the livelong day,
And as the minutes sped away,
So seemed it to the wretch, he felt
The life that in his members dwelt
(Like waxen image set of old
By magic fire with rites untold)
Minute by minute, hour by hour,
Waste and still waste its vital power,
And melt perceptibly away.
Thus sate he through the livelong day,
Powerless alike for good or ill,
Bound hand and foot, a captive still ;
Wretched and conscious of his lot,
And longed to rise and yet did not.
Oh, what a lesson was there told
In that wise saw that said of old,
“ One half thy will thou sure wilt win
So soon as e'er thou darest begin !”

XXIX. TO ONE WEeping AT THE FA'L
OF A TREE.

Our old Ash gone?—And why the tear,
If it be lopped away?
It is the fate of all things here
That they should all decay.

But not decayed; but in its bloom,
And in its pride of years;
—Asks not at least so sad a doom
These unavailing tears?

Nature asks nought that nought avails:
Yet give thy heart relief;
There is a spirit in these dales
That justifies the grief.

Look round!—we have no purple hills
That scale the evening sky;
No far-seen falls of sparkling rills
These pastures dignify.

Yet have we beauty of our own,
A bliss which may we keep!
Which gives our hearts a gentle tone,
And teaches us to weep.

Green pastoral fields that for their state
Look to the sky above,
And on the clouds and sunshine wait
With reverential love ;

These are our boon : nor fail thereto
Calm waters, that appear
To watch the fields they wander through,
And brighten with the year.

Thus all things round us tune, I guess,
The spirit and the sense
To a dependent tenderness
And mutual confidence :

And thou mayst weep : for if the tears
Raise not the fallen tree,
They keep thy heart for other years
The closer friend to thee.

XXX.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A Rainbow in the sky.

WORDSWORTH.

It was a day of shower and sun,
By summer breezes softly fanned,
Amongst the vales and mountains dun,
And sprinkled Lakes of Cumberland :
Such day as best that land may choose,
Where Nature's choicest gifts have striven,
And Earth puts forth her freshest hues
To sparkle in the light of heaven.

I passed along the mountain side,
And watched the falling drops that broke
The crystal Lake's transparent tide,
While hills beyond in sunshine woke :
And marked the gleams that passing o'er
Brought out in clear distinctive view
The heathered outlines that before
Were melted into shapeless blue.

But soon a sight of new surprise
Called off my thoughts from even flow :
I saw a rainbow arch arise,
And span half-way the vale below.

In bold relief it stood displayed
Against the further mountain's side ;
And bolder still in darkest shade
Towered up that mountain's loftier pride.

Most beautiful it was to trace
That blended arch of sparkling rain
Rise gently upward from the base,
And fall as gently down again.
That faultless outline's perfect mould,
Those blended hues in fair degree ;
But yet, though beauteous to behold,
It was no sight of joy to me.

For I in southern lands had dwelt,
Where hills are low and clouds are high ;
And, taught unconsciously, had felt
That bow an inmate of the sky.
And fondly deemed that arch's span,
That soaring pile that sprang to birth,
A breadth beyond the reach of man,
A height above the touch of earth.

It was a shape of joy and praise,
The welcome ' rainbow in the sky ;'
Linked with young childhood's holiest gaze
And poets' sweetest minstrelsy,
And sight it was of saddehning pain
To find the covenant bow shrunk down,
A humble inmate of the plain,
A mountain's tributary crown.

Alas that ignorance chid and taught,
 Whilst wandering in life's onward maze,
Should ever break some clue of thought
 That leads us back to earlier days !
Alas that knowledge icy cold
 Should join the humble with the true,
To leave us, as its stores are told,
 The wiser and the poorer too !

Four years, my friend, are passed along,
 Since thou and I together first
Opened that spring of friendship strong,
 That will not fail our constant thirst.
How many a hope that then would rise
 Hath faded since that time away ;
The hues that decked our former skies,
 The rainbows of an earlier day.

How many an end we cherished best,
 A stay in sorrow and in pain,
Has stood discovered and confessed,
 Unhallowed, impotent, and vain :
And thoughts we deemed of heavenly birth
 Have proved them sprung from selfish mind,
By some tall point of grosser earth
 That rose above them and behind.

Grieve not for these, though bright they shone ;
 Far better that our hopes should die,
Than vain and dazzled wander on,
 Unthinking of the purer sky ;

The foolish heart would strive to blend
The fleeting mist's fallacious hue,
The passing tints that vapours lend,
With highest heaven's abiding blue.

Grieve not for these : nor dare lament
That thus from childhood's thoughts we roam :
Not backward are our glances bent
But forward to our Father's home.
Eternal growth has no such fears,
But freshening still with seasons past,
The old man clogs its earlier years,
And simple childhood comes the last.

Yes, as each ignorant thought of pride
Yields to the touch of wisdom true,
Some hateful bar is cast aside
That held us from that childhood's view :
As each new lesson swells the whole,
A new and lasting link is given,
Some foretaste of the childlike soul
Of such as are the sons of heaven.

XXXI.

'Tis a pleasant shade
That winds old Avon's cloven arm, a shade
Of beechen boughs, and oak, and starry larch ;
And over Aganippe a green birch
Hangs down its arms, and with a gentle hand
Plays with the water ; flinging buds thereon
In spring, and when the flighty summer wind
Is higher than his wont, a few bright leaves.
At even, when the west is all ablaze,
A tender light lies on it, not the sun's
'Tis true, but a delicious yellow haze,
Lit by the sun upon the neighbouring isle
Which is one sheet of king-cups—'twere too bright
Even thus, if 'twere not for some willow boughs
That temper it with dim uncertain grey.
Yet though shut out from sunset, deem it not
Disconsolate, for through the western firs
Come dark red gleams not seldom, and the gnats
In their wreathed dance catch oft upon their wings,
The light, and fling it down upon the stream.

XXXII.

MY window bower is green and bright,
Though something of an autumn light
Is hiding in the leaves,
A lustre warm and rich yet clear,
That hints the tender Season near
Which smiles as it bereaves.

My fuchsia buds grow somewhat pale,
And should a harsher air prevail
Than lifts June's lazy boughs,
Silently circling down the breeze
A leaf or two from yonder trees
The warning voice allows.

So sang I,—when the Summer leant
On Autumn's breast in gay content,
And felt no deeper care
Than gratifies a happy soul,
If thus at times the Suitor stole
A lock of her bright hair.

I have lived round the year : I saw
The summer loveliness withdraw,
The winter blank succeed :
The heart that gleans as it should glean
Will know what nature's warnings mean,
And listen and take heed.

XXXIII. A REQUEST AND THE ANSWER.

“ GIVE me one Thought of thine, to be
“ A living monument of thee ;
“ Though soon obscured, though soon forgot,
“ The thoughts of mortals perish not ;
“ There is a time when all shall come,
“ Like trooping sprites, to hear their doom ;
“ All on the opening mind shall blaze,
“ The gathered lights of many days.
“ All live till then ; that judgment past,
“ Thoughts fair and fruitful only last.
“ Then give one Thought, ’twill last, though frail,
“ At least till earth’s foundations fail.
“ And haply then, to Heaven preferred,
“ Live in its archives registered.”

Askest thou a thought? Ah! what is thought?
A fleeting shade ; a thing of nought,
Sitting on babbling lips, whose cry
Lures onward iron Poverty ;
A nerveless shape ; an ice-cold flame ;
An idol ; now a chance-born name,
Now flaunting in the eyes of men,
Now lurking in some lonely den ;
A coin to cheat with ; or a stone

Transmitting lustre not its own.
Yet what so cheap? let one receive
Expression, hundreds more will heave
Ready for life; as on the shore
One sparkling wave may break and roar
For myriads more that swell and strain,
Far in the deep unbroken main.
Ten thousand beams are lost in space
For one that lights a planet's face;
The dull dead earth drinks up the shower,
One raindrop gems the living flower;
While bowing foliage strains the root
Few leaves protect the nestling fruit;
So thoughts are countless, truths are few,
That thought is nought which tells not true.

Then ask not such; their tinsel light
May ill befit the pageant bright,
Passions unfeigned, the issuing train
That thickly throng another's brain;
Who, wise in time, hath cared to stay
Their footsteps ere they passed away.
The solar fountain glows and burns,
Cold beams the musing moon returns;
Mine, like the phantom fires that flame
On Hecat's altar, scarce may claim
To mix their lamp with torches bright
From Nature's hearth, true vestal light;
For, be the fuel pure or foul,
Not Thought but Passion fires the soul.

•

Passionless thoughts are mine, nor dare
Thy high theatric pomp to share ;
Nor should they, knew I not the glow
Of torches lit at hearths we know,
How ill strange fire in Fancy's eye
With such auspicious light may vie ;
The priceless value of a weed
When much-loved soil hath nursed the seed ;
A fruitless flower, a thought, a name,
Prized for the place from which they came.
Take, then, this thought, the end will shew
Whether 'tis vanity or no.

—Few rightly name the name of Love,
Who never sought its source above ;
Few save the heaven-taught bard could tell
Of that mysterious chain that fell
From Jove's high throne, its mighty girth
Binding to heaven the balanced earth.
Who ne'er has learnt the fruitful end
For which he lives, nor striven to bend
Heart, mind, and will, to that high goal
Lacks Love's full brightness in his soul.

XXXIV. ON A MELANCHOLY BIRTHDAY

SONG.

Nor rightly they who have ere while essayed
The celebration of Time's turning days,
A finger of high praise
Upon their harps have laid,
And tuned a lofty measure
Of hope, and youth, and pleasure,
And joys of life more sweet that they are yet delayed ;
They should have wailed and wept,
And thought of things undone and things gone by,
And them who kept
Their rest beneath the turf so silently.

Yet hark ! ev'n they,
The noisy dancers round Time's rolling wheel,
When for themselves the lay
Hath been awaked, by what they *feel*
Taught truth they knew not when 'twas far away,
Have let the music steal
Far up and down among the Years,
Kissing with faint and farewell kisses
The olden joys it misses,
As each appears ;

As 'twere the odour of a dying flower,
With sad soft visiting,
Searching each nook of that despoiled bower
Which thrilled beneath its fragrance in the spring.

XXXV. ON VISITING A WILD BEAST SHOW
AFTER AN EVENING WALK.

SUNSET and these fierce sounds, the brazen Eve.
And these wild Asian voices, 'tis no wrong
To Nature's single heart to join them thus.
So thought I to subdue the intruding doubt
With reason's reedy spear : I might have won
And taught my heart to go astray for years,
But for one little thing, no more than this.

Where our dear spring goes trickling silently
Into the deeper stream (no gentle wind
That glides into the deep of the air, more still)
An hour before I stood. Quiet was there,
All quiet, the deep quiet of the eve,
The deeper quiet of Love, for he with me
Stood looking on that little trickling stream
Whom I love more than life, and in whose love
I taste that calm I never knew before,
The quiet of a satisfied heart. The west
Meanwhile was tossing in the setting sun,
Billowy calm, and wild volcanic surf,
A sea of golden fire ! But all the storm
Was noiseless, so the mind, being undisturbed
By terror, could enjoy the unreal shew,
And to its peace add yet the accessional calm

Of fancy in fruition. All this peace
Fell round us, him and me, in Holbrook Copse ;
And twinkling leaves, and folded daisy buds,
Bent for repose, the gnats, and the dimming distance,
And all the usual remembrancers
Of rest and slumber, could not move us more.
Then the dear company of our English birds,
Cuckoo, and the wooden-throated crake; and lark
Whose heart outswells his bosom, these we left
In their last ecstasy, and I, alone, .
Entered the thronged menagerie.

The shock

Was broken by sweet music, and at first
I felt not aught unfitting. There around
Was all that beauty, beauty of colour, and form,
And power, and dim association,
Which I have loved since childhood, haply then :
The leopard, that among my nightly dreams
Hath laid his snowy lip to Junga's wave
At noon or the Indian eve, while over him
The oleander held a tender shade
Of pale pink tremulous flowers ; and there as well
The lion lay asleep, or half awake.
Lifted a grave slow eye, till I could think
The light distilled through palm leaves, and the
ground
Bestrewn with withered dates ; and there besides
Were all the Southern Americ's gorgeous birds,
And Africa's fair serpents. Yet ere long
Came doubt lest I profaned the quiet eve

I quitted for these wonders. Reason wove
A cunning web, and nature's unseen hand
Untwined it ; I was vexed with painful doubts ;
And all the calm that I had gathered up
Into the garner of my heart, from eve
And love, was wasting. Then a little voice
Pierced through that discord of the heart and head ;
A little voice, one same, low, plaintive note,
The coo of a caged stock-dove.

Instantly

I did abjure all doubt, and put away
All trouble and unrest, and though I stayed
For others' sakes in that hot booth, meanwhile
My heart was with my love in Holbrook Copse.

XXXVI. THE MOON WHOM CAPTIVES LOVE.

Smile of the moon !—for so I name
That silent greeting from above ;
A gentle flash of light that came
From her whom drooping captives love.

THE LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.
WORDSWORTH.

HE knew thee well, fair Queen of Night,
Who named thee her whom captives love ;
For then methinks the barred delight
Doth not so painfully invite ;
And all the walks by hill and grove
Put on a calm pictorial mien,
As less to be desired than seen.

Not she alone whose woe-worn eyes
In many a noontide's glowing mood
Saw joy they could not recognize :
Not she alone hath learned to prize
The stiller bliss ; and understood
That raptures which do not repress
Out of themselves their own excess,
Make an imperfect happiness.

At such an hour a lovelier heart
Than dwelt in Scotland's lovely queen,

Learned too the self-consoling art ;
Rent his dark prison's walls apart,
While his clear spirit walked unseen
In realms as glorious as the mind
Can reach when earth is left behind.

Honour to Raleigh—deathless name !
Honour and pity : never a star
Breathes from the height of noble fame
A tenderer or a brighter flame ;
With him all gentle fancies are,
That hedge from Time's desire the great,
The good, and the unfortunate.

He through his bars a wandering eye
(No truant to the heart at home)
Sent often when the moon was high,
While gleams as silver as the sky
From gabled roof, and spire, and dome,
Told still of life, but life subdued
To silence and to solitude.

So works the Earth to comfort all :
And thus by many a change benign
She answers every nature's call :
And every ill that can befall
Our spirit hath its medicine ;
Hath hours, when all the world seems bent,
To ease its private discontent !

XXXVII. TRANSLATION.

ÆNEID XI. 342—377.

Tum Drances idem infensus, quem gloria Turni
Obliqua invidia stimulisque agitabat amaris,
Surgit et his onerat dictis atque aggerat iras.

MATTER to none obscure, nor our poor voice
Requiring takest thou counsel of, good king !
What end the fortune of our nation brings
All know, allow they know, yet dread to speak.
He must first give them liberty of speech,
Unloose their prisoned breath, by whose advice,
Ill-omened, and whose manners ill-severe,
So many leaders' eyes have closed,—through whom
Our city sits together in our sight
One company of mourners, while he tries
The Trojan camp (his confidence in flight)
And startles heaven with arms.

Most excellent king !

One gift yet farther to those gifts proposed,
Propitiation to the Dardanids,
One only gift add more—thy virgin child.
Her, let the violence of none withstand
But that her father to a son-in-law
Most noble, nuptials worthy, do present ;

With an eternal bond sealing this peace.
But if a fear so terrible possess
Our hearts and minds, himself let us entreat,
From him beseech our pardon for the deed ;
Let him give up the maid,—to king and country
Yield of his grace their own ! Why, why so oft
Dost thou fling out upon this naked peril
The wretched citizens, head of Latium's woe ?
No help is there in war, peace ask we all,
Turnus, and peace's only certain pledge.
I first, thy fancied foe, ready to bear
That name in truth, if need be,—see ! I come
A suppliant : have thou pity on thy friends,
• Subdue thy soul, be vanquished and depart !
Enough already of defeat and death
Have we beheld, and mighty fields laid waste.
Or if fame move thee so, if in thy breast
So strongly breed the valour, and so sweet
The indowered sceptre seem, have then thy will,
Offer the foe with confidence thy breast.
So Turnus gets his royal wife, and we
(Cheap lives) are indistinguishably strown
Upon the earth, unburied, unbewailed !
Now, if thou darest, aught if thou possess
Of that thy lineal valour, look in the face
Him who now calls thee !

Kindled the fire in Turnus' heart thereat ;
Groaning, from out the bottom of his breast
Break forth these words.

* * * * *

DARKNESS DEPARTED.



STANZAS INTRODUCTORY.

My Lute, since Love enslaved thy numbers
A change hath passed across the strings,
And thou hast caught in peaceful slumbers
A vision of serener things ;
And Passion's wayward flight is over ;
And Fancy's fever-fit is past ;
And all the tumults of the lover
Are settled in the friend at last !

'Tis true, my heart with fresher blossom
Is green—but there is none for thee—
Oh how the tongue belies the bosom !
O take thy choice most full and free ;
If I have stayed the hasty finger,
That long ere this thy strings had drest,
Believe, be sure, I did but linger
To judge which seemed the worthiest.

And I have judged, and I will gather,
And I will twine my fairest flowers,
Sweet Peace, and Love, that bloom the rather
For wintry winds and clouded hours ;
That Peace, the ever-green unfailing,
Which screens the soul from storms of sin ;
That Christian Love that lies exhaling
Its odorous incense safe within.

My gentle Lute, full many a folly
Hath erst been wedded to thy chords ;

Wild Love, distempered Melancholy,
And fondest knots of fondest words :
O be that use forgot, forgiven !
Let mirth give place to thoughts more meet,
And earthly weeds to flowers of heaven
Surrender, fairer in defeat !

Some herbs earth's valleys have about them,
To human hearts so sweet and dear,
That heaven's own amaranths without them
Could seem but dull and scentless here ;
Henceforth may such mixed garlands cherish
Thy new-strung chords, my gentle lute,
Or let the frailer flowerets perish !
And ye, loved strings, be mute ! be mute !

DARKNESS DEPARTED. (19)

I.

ALONE, alone, quite desolate,
My friends afar, or cold,
In study's self-deceiving state
My weary watch I hold.

But oh ! I study not ; the book
Upon my knee may lie ;
'Tis all unread ; I only look
Upon the starry sky.

Sometimes unto the page I turn,
But oh ! 'tis all in vain ;
My head swims round, my eye-balls burn,
Till I look up again.

And wandering thought will ever stray
To those bright stars above,
And think of her as far away,
And her as watchful love.

II.

How often sit I, twining sand;
In all my dark to-come,
Striving but vainly to command
One sunny spot for home ;

One slip of green whereon to set
A home where I might lie,
And looking downwards half forget
The black o'erhanging sky !

III.

THEY ask me if I have not got
Some secret in my brain,
I say, Oh yes ! now guess ye what—
Nay, prithee, guess again.
They say, Some lady's smiles are hid,
He is in love, you know :
Now very God in heaven forbid
That love should e'er be so !

No ! 'tis not love, for love is made
Of joy and pain mixed up,
And this to my cold lips conveyed
Is an unmingled cup :
I have no hopes and secret smiles
To cheat me of my sleep ;
Me of my rest no bliss beguiles,
I lie awake to weep !

For love, the flower, is dead and dry ;
Its blossom died before ;
I but remember with a sigh
What blessed hues it wore.
It was the first, best, only Plant
That in my garden grew ;
And I must love it, though it want
Its olden scent and hue.

So 'tis love's ghost who dwells with me,
A thin and bloodless shade,
And me almost as thin as he
His company hath made.
My diet—how I sleep and eat,
May others never know !
My rest is on dead hopes, my meat
Is words said long ago.

And so they tell me I am pale,
And in my youth look old,—
I marvel that a sadder tale
Hath not ere this been told ;
The tempest now hath been so long
And fierce above my head,
If I had not been young and strong
I long since had been dead.

But no, I cannot wholly die,
For God who reigns above
Knows that I could not upwards fly ;
My wings are tied by love.
I cannot win my thoughts away
From this world's pain and sorrow ;
Methinks I scarce could kneel and pray
If I must die to-morrow.

No ! my dead heart may not awake ;
'Tis buried in the earth ;
'Twere likelier that a corpse should break
His coffin and come forth.

Love dying drew with it my heart,
My heart holds down my soul ;
I cannot rend the links apart,
And I must lose the whole.

I speak with calmness, yet I know
Full well the words I say :
I thought of them so long ago,
They give small pain to-day.
And this it is whose deadly shade
Hath killed my hopes of joy ;
And me so pale and thin hath made,
And aged while a boy.

IV.

My store of love is gathered in,
And never may I seek again,
For mine own gain, the smiles to win
Which men throw carelessly to men ;
To know they are mine own, no chance
Directing, but an earnest eye,
Which sends to mine the meaning glance
Of mutual fealty.

As I have done, no more do I :
Again I may not wander forth
To tend the sympathies that lie
Uncared for on the thriftless earth,
Till the waste plant grow up apace,
A pleasant bower, a shady tree ;
To many souls a resting-place,
A very home to me !

V.

THIS one sad truth how truly keep
The faithless host of years,
That he who sows in smiles shall reap
In unavailing tears ;

That though Joy's beams a moment shroud .
Our pilgrimage of pain,
'Tis but a Rainbow, and the cloud
Will soon be black again.

VI.

LET me return !—I have not found
The treasure which I hid of old,
Or deemed I hid, amidst the sound
Of these dark billows pacing round,
A young heart's blessed hopes profound,
And quietness untold.

At even, when the parting sun
Outspread his glowing wings for flight,
I came, and in the twilight dun
Hid many joys, and many an one
In the blue vest of night ;

Joys gathered from the day ; the thought
Of smiles from eyes that loved me breaking ;
And lightning looks from clouded wrought ;
And things to others that seemed nought,
To me sweet pastime making.

These I hid here by this dread sea,
Among these rocks so drear and lone ;
And deemed I had whereto to flee
If darker days should come to me ;

And darker days are come to me,
And now my hoard is gone !

And now all stern is nature's face ;
And fervent souls, though wounded, high,
Brook ill her only grudging grace,
The lonesness of the desert place,
And the o'er-brooding sky.

And hearts not thankless yet must long
For other sights and sounds than these ;
The striving, unattaining throng
Of waves rolled fruitlessly along,
And the dull galleyslave-like song
Of the laborious seas.

Let me return, before the throne
Of human sympathy to kneel,
If there be such ;—if not, my own
Close heart shall better mourn alone,
Than grieve to this unhearing stone,
And sea that cannot feel.

Again be yours your solitude,
Unlistening Rocks and scornful Sea !
No more upon your haughty mood
My tones of sorrow shall intrude,
Ye are too high for me !

I came to you, my old repose,
The peace of happier days to find ;

And I have learned how Nature grows
More niggard as our need she knows,
And lets her sun but shine for those
That have a sunny mind.

VII. A FAREWELL TO AN OLD SET OF
COLLEGE ROOMS.

FAREWELL, old rooms, both good and ill
Have passed in you, and must do still ;
Though to others be the fears,
Hopes, and happiness, and tears.
Life must be a mingled cup,
Joy and sorrow make it up,
Lovings, hatings, comings, leavings,
Hopings, trustings, undeceivings.
Ah ! 'tis sometimes hard to know
If the weal exceed the woe,
Or the bitter overflow.

You, old walls, have seen me lie
On my tossed bed sleeplessly,
While I thought of them that lay
Cold, and dead, and far away ;
Him beside the soft wave hidden,
Once by Roman bark beridden,
When the laurelled conqueror brought
Good and evil strangely wrought,
Arts and knowledge, shame and fear,

To the barbarian islander ;
Or the milder face of him
Nursed in valleys deep and dim,
Where the soul of man is bent,
Nature's kindly instrument,
To the still and holy mood
Of the Alpine solitude.
Them I thought of, gently healing
Festered wounds of slighted feeling,
With the knowledge sure and dear
That, had they but tarried here,
I had never wiped as now
Icy drops from friendless brow :
And the thought, like gentle words
Sweetly tuned to holy chords,
Lulled my throbbing heart to rest,
With another still more blest
That in all the sore distress
Of my longing loneliness,
Selfish wish had never risen
To recall them to their prison,
Who on unbound wings had fled
To be happy overhead.

Hours like these have shed a gloom
O'er my little cheerful room,
Yet the shade is put to flight
By such pleasure as to-night :
Words of chance have taken root,

Hidden seed hath come to fruit ;
Light of pleasant eyes is on me,
Words of love are showered upon me ;
And I come, by music led
Of those loving words so said,
From the shades as dark to me
As Tartarus to Eurydice.

Such a blending comes to me,
Old room, when I look on thee :
First I count my former weeping,
Day with day sad Lent-tide keeping,
Fasting from the soul's delight,
Loving nought but coming night,
Night again with answering sorrow
Loving nought but coming morrow,
Day and night with one same chain
Bounden, running round again ;
Then my callous heart unhardens,
Like the earth of frost-bound gardens,
When the earliest crocus peeps,
And the snow-drop slily weeps
Tears of pleasure to the sun ;
And my tears as freely run,
Joyous tears ;—the balmy rain
Of love's spring come back again.

Now farewell, if not in sorrow
I forsake you, by to-morrow

Will come something, not regret
But a feeling kindlier yet,
The serene memorial mood,
And a little gratitude.

OBSERVATIONS.

WHAT is usually said at the beginning of a volume I propose to say here, between the text and the notes. Dryden remarks (in one of his admirable introductions, if I rightly remember), that a man's powers may be judged by his work, his common sense by his preface. Perhaps a fear to meet this criterion makes me thus disguise it: at any rate, as the matter of a preface is usually some expression of personal opinion, it seems to me more fitting that it should be delivered here in the privacy, as it were, of the 340th page, than that it should thrust itself upon the reader in the opening of the book.

There are several poems, I am aware, among the foregoing which will be by many objected to, as too open revelations of private feeling. This very common objection seems to me to be founded on a misapprehension, or only a partial apprehension of what poetry is (using the word in its abstract sense), and consequently of the sort of critical judgment to which it is liable. As explanations come always with a better grace volunteered than demanded, I shall anticipate the courtesy due to

an accused person by stating, as shortly as I can, why the objection appears to me an unfair one.

Most justly is the practice of poetical composition called the poetical Art; for the experience of all ages has shewn clearly enough that through his art alone can the poet face the changes of taste and time. But if there is an art to exhibit, there must be a power also to conceive. This, of course, is nothing new; and no one, when it is put to him in this form, would think of denying it. But the human mind, generally, holds intellectual truth with a grasp at least as weak and unsure as it holds truth moral or spiritual. We shall see the injustice which is done by a partial recognition of the poet's twofold character, as a conceiver and as an artist; and those who will may think of the pain which it has caused.

In society, and in all matters that concern the Man, himself, the Poet's character as a Conceiver is not only acknowledged but often unjustly exalted. He is so generally looked upon as the only possessor of the "*mens divini*or," or, in the common term, inspiration, that many a man, not enough remembering that his talents are not his own, has avoided exhibiting poetical powers that he may have possessed, from a vague notion that he should thereby be assuming what he might feel to be an unjust, or at any rate an unpleasant, superiority over other men. In the same manner as the Watchmaker, or any other Craftsman, claims a

superiority over those who are ignorant of his craft, the poet does indeed claim a superiority over other men ; and he claims an additional superiority as a conceiver over those who are not conceivers. But the astronomer, the historian, the sculptor, the painter, the musical composer, are as much Conceivers, and as much enjoy their inspiration, as the poet who among us is the only one who receives the glory ; and I suppose that there have been persons in modern times as well as ancient who have felt even Terpsichore to be a genuine Muse.

But while the Man has been reaping in society the benefit of the exaggeration of his character as a Conceiver, ample revenge is being taken on his Work by a like exaggeration in literature of the other half of his character, his character as an Artist. As a Conceiver, his power is drawn from all the faculties of his nature, his perception, his invention, his reflection, his imagination, and his heart. As an Artist, he works from the judgment and the power of language only. Now the true criticism to which every literary work is justly liable is the reduction of it to that faculty from which it set out ; just as the correctness of an arithmetical sum is proved by doing it backwards.

And now to apply what has been said to the point I have been trying to prove,—the unreasonableness, namely, of the common objection to poetry involving to any extent an exhibition of

private feeling. The process is short. The conceiver is in this case drawing his power from the Heart alone, and to the Heart alone therefore must the result be submitted. The *wording* indeed of such poems may fairly be challenged by the judgment, for this is an exercise of the art; but if the *feeling* be not responded to, what is proved but that the heart which calls, or that which refuses answer is diseased? And what then the alternative but the silence of compassion or the silence of self-accusation? Here, then, is no room for criticism, and to one, I think, who feels the solemnity which surrounds every phase of a human Soul, there is still less room for disgust.

So much I have said at the risk of appearing dogmatical, because I would willingly undergo the blame if the sacredness of such revelations may be at no less price defended. But is the reader unconvinced by what I have written? Then let him be persuaded by what I shall quote. The following passage is from an Edinburgh Review of twenty years ago, and I think its eloquence will excuse its length. It is but fair to say, that the critic is speaking of a "*great poet*," but if what he says be true at all, it must also be applicable in proportion to every one who is really a poet, and not (to use Carlyle's fearless vernacular) a "*sham*."

"Each of us," says this writer, "must have been aware in himself of a singular illusion by which these disclosures, when read with that tender

or high interest which attaches to poetry, seem to have something of the nature of private and confidential communications. They are not felt, while we read, as declarations published to the world,—but almost as secrets whispered to chosen ears. Who is there that feels, for a moment, that the voice which reaches the inmost recesses of his heart is speaking to the careless multitudes around him? Or, if we do so remember, the words seem to pass by others like air, and to find their way to the hearts for whom they were intended,—kindred and sympathizing spirits, who discern and own that secret language, of which the privacy is not violated, though spoken in the hearing of the uninitiated,—because it is not understood. There is an unobserved beauty that smiles on us alone; and the more beautiful to us, because we feel as if chosen out from a crowd of lovers. Something analogous to this is felt in the grandest scenes of Nature and of Art. Let a hundred persons look from a hill-top over some transcendent landscape. Each will select from the wide-spread glory at his feet, for his more special love and delight, some different gleam of sunshine,—or solemn grove,—or embowered spire,—or brown-mouldering ruin,—or castellated cloud. During their contemplation, the soul of each man is amidst its own creations, and in the heart of his own solitude;—nor is the depth of that solitude broken though it lies open to the sunshine, and before the eyes of unnumbered

spectators. * * * * But there are other reasons why we read with complacency writings which, by the most public declaration of our most secret feelings, ought, it might seem, to shock and revolt our sympathy. A great poet may address the whole world in the language of intensest passion, concerning objects of which, rather than speak, face to face, with anyone human being on earth, he would perish in his misery. For it is in solitude that he utters what is to be wafted by all the winds of heaven. There are, during his inspiration, present with him only the shadows of men. He is not daunted, or perplexed, or disturbed, or repelled, by real living breathing features. He can updraw just as much as he chooses of the curtain that hangs between his own solitude and the world of life. He thus pours his soul out, partly to himself alone,—partly to the ideal abstractions and impersonated images that float round him at his own conjuration,—and partly to human beings like himself, moving in the dark distance of the every day world. He confesses himself not before men, but before the Spirit of Humanity.”

More might yet be said, I think, touching what has been yet omitted, the necessities, namely, of what is called the poetical temperament, but after this magnificent passage I am not inclined to try to say it.

NOTES.



NOTES.

I WISH to remark, that four poems in the volume were not written by me. There are reasons why the discerning Public must be left to distinguish them for herself; no preference that she may give to them can mortify me, for they were written by those to whom I would willingly resign much more valuable considerations than praise.

NOTE 1. PAGE 3.

Yet for the vision's splendour that hath been.

“ The youth who daily farther from the East
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended.” WORDSWORTH.

NOTE 2. PAGE 37.

*And she arose unto the light and shook
The flood-drift from her face.*

“ And shook the flood-drift from her clouded face.”

This is a line, and I think a striking one, from a prize poem by a schoolfellow on the subject of “ The Ark on the Mountains of Ararat.”

NOTE 3. PAGE 37.

The green leaves whiten ever restlessly.

“ L'uliva in qualche dolce spiaggia aprica
Secondo il vento par or verde or bianca.”

These lines, to which I am indebted for the image in the

text (the willow here answering to the olive of the southern landscape), are quoted by Roscoe as a specimen of Lorenzo de' Medici's poetical powers, and indifferently translated by the biographer into the following oily couplet :

" On some sweet sunny slope the olive grows,
Its hues still changing as the zephyr blows."

NOTE 4. PAGE 40.

The wedded boughs of interwoven pines.

The expression "wedded boughs" is to be found in the following passage of Shelley's *Alastor* :

" Like restless serpents, clothed
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
The grey trunks, and as gamesome infant's eyes,
With gentle meanings and most innocent wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs,
Uniting their close union."

It was by accident that I became aware of having borrowed here, and I dare say that there are many cases where I have borrowed and am still unaware of it.

NOTE 5. PAGE 45.

A tree of fire.

"Branchy flame," or some like expression, implying the obvious image used in the text, is to be read in one (I cannot remember which) of Ebenezer Elliot's Poems. I do not mention this to own an obligation in this case, for I had not been happy enough to read any of Elliot's poems, I believe, when the line in question was written, but to gain an opportunity of offering my humble tribute of admiration to a great Poet.

NOTE 6. PAGE 58.

The drear blank height.

" Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry, hold, hold !"

MACBETH.

It was Coleridge's admirable suggestion (whether right or wrong) that "blanket" here was a corruption of "blank height."

NOTE 7. PAGE 113. Song.

I think it as well to mention, that this song and one or two other poems that may seem to be of the same spirit, were written when I was very young, and are only retained as specimens. The same apology ought to be made for two among the Occasional Sonnets, called *Venus Emergens*. Any one, however, will see there that they were written when I knew no more about a sonnet than that it was to contain fourteen lines.

NOTE 8. PAGE 186.

*In thine innocence will I be calm, and in thy
goodness gay.*

"Serene as Innocence, as Goodness gay."

This line is from "The Reigning Vice," a poem by a friend, exhibiting powers of satire which one is quite as well satisfied that one's friends in general should not possess. He has not chosen to put his name upon the title page, or I would make a public appeal to him to let the world see the beautiful poems which he yet withholds from it.

NOTE 9. PAGE 196.

The golden waves from that rich land retreating.

How I came to forget that the Mediterranean tide is so slight as to be unnoticeable I do not know, especially as in the neighbour sonnet, which was written at the same period, the peculiarity is dwelt upon: the mistake, however, was made, and the rhyme has nailed it.

NOTE 10. PAGE 198.

*And see the brine
Is here, the mindful Sea's commemoration,
Annually served, of brotherhood in birth.*

In the Monsoon season the floor of this cave is covered with salt water.

NOTE 11. PAGE 199. Sonnet.

Either a superstitious regard for truth, or a wish to keep my verses as free as possible from the suspicion of "shams," makes me confess that I never did meet the dawn in the way here described. If any one would suggest how the sonnet could be so altered as to preserve the truth and the simile together, I should be very glad to adopt the alteration.

NOTE 12. PAGE 208.

Not that immortal Mantuan's tender strain.

The allusion is to the Episode of Nisus and Euryalus, which seems to me unequalled in pathos by any story ever told. The sonnets of Shakspeare, which are alluded to in the next line, are very lovely, and very little admired.

NOTE 13. PAGE 209.

"A garland fashioned of the pure white rose."

The line is from the XXVth of Mr. Wordsworth's "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty," Part I.

NOTE 14. PAGE 224. Sonnets to the Poet Wordsworth.

It is worth while saying, to free me from the suspicion of adulation in case these sonnets should ever come under Mr. Wordsworth's eye, that they were written after accidentally meeting him in society, and when I had no idea that I should

ever have the happiness of seeing more of the venerable Poet. The feeling is therefore genuine, however awkwardly expressed.

NOTE 15. PAGE 245. Sonnet after reading a book of Eastern Travels.

The book in question was Major Skinner's Travels, a book made delightful by the good spirits of the writer. The epithet "sweet" here applied to the desert is only proper in spring, when it is covered with flowers, geraniums and mignonette being the commonest.

NOTE 16. PAGE 264.

Airs of grace.

"She calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace."

SHAKESPEARE.

NOTE 17. PAGE 278.

The allusions to Milton and Shakspeare in this stanza do not need particularizing.

NOTE 18. PAGE 295.

*The primrose there
Lights up her stars upon the shady air.*

I am glad that I have an opportunity of adding another to the public requests already made to Mr. Sidney Walker to allow his MS. poems to be printed; private request appears to be utterly in vain; and the poems, which are remarkable for a melody and imagery alike delicate and exquisite, are left to the enjoyment of his friends alone in the perishable shape of loose sheets of paper. The idea in the text was, I believe, taken from one of these secreted compositions.

NOTE 19. PAGE 329. DARENESS DEPARTED.

I wish to say, that the Poems under this title were written

during that unsettled state of mind which I suppose most men sometime or other in their lives must pass through; a state which, however morbid in itself, may be necessary to the formation of a sure and settled health.

THE END.

C. Whittingham, Took's Court, Chancery Lane.

